Miss Gray's Girls
·Jeannette·A·Grant·
PRINCESS SERIES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_Y0-BUM-516_y0t2

MISS GRAY'S GIRLS

A Highland Piper

(*See page 72.*)

PRINCESS SERIES

MISS GRAY'S GIRLS

Or, Summer Days in the Scottish Highlands

By

JEANNETTE A. GRANT

ILLUSTRATED

L. C. PAGE & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS BOSTON

Copyright, 1893, by
Joseph Knight Company.

DEDICATION.

TO THE DEAR FRIENDS IN THE HIGHLANDS — THE MEMORY OF WHOSE HOSPITALITY HAS BEEN IN MY HEART AS I WROTE — THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A Delightful Piece of News	1
II.	All About It	15
III.	Spring Vacation	28
IV.	Getting Ready	33
V.	"Good-by!"	38
VI.	On the Atlantic	42
VII.	Leta's Story of a Day	46
VIII.	Nearing the Other Side	53
IX.	Glasgow	61
X.	The Crinan Canal	69
XI.	"Oban in the Highlands"	80
XII.	A Day among the Islands	88
XIII.	Back at Oban	109
XIV.	The Caledonian Canal	116
XV.	Northward by Rail	137
XVI.	Uncle Duncan's Home	145
XVII.	A School Exhibition	158
XVIII.	A Highland Castle	168
XIX.	The Scotch Kirk	177
XX.	Making New Acquaintances	181
XXI.	Cromarty Firth and "Kinlossie"	189
XXII.	The Midsummer Fair	200
XXIII.	A Sacrament Day	205
XXIV.	A Crofter's Home	209
XXV.	Going toward the South	223
XXVI.	Outings in Edinburgh	234
XXVII.	The Trossachs and — Farewell!	246

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
A Highland Piper . . . . . *Frontispiece.*	
"Leta Barrows stood before the little dressing-case" . .	1
On the Veranda	13
Map of Highlands and Caledonian Canal	16
Iona	17
Old Edinburgh	23
"At an early hour trunks and girls were to be seen" . .	28
Street in Back Bay	29
"Their walks were now through roads where every tree was unfolding a wealth of buds"	33
Girl in Steamer Chair	37
Stateroom on Steamer	38
Steamer at Sea	40
Writing up the Journal	42
Promenade on Deck	45
Dining-room on Steamer	48
"A lovely place to get the freshest air and view the sky and sea"	49
Giant's Causeway	57
Dumbarton Rock and Castle	60
Street in Glasgow	64
Glasgow Cathedral	67
Tarbert Castle	71
A Highland Bagpiper	73
Oban Bay and Town	77
An English Yacht	80
Tailpiece, Chapter XI.	87
Staffa	96
Tobermory	104

PAGE

Ardtornish Castle 107
Dunstaffnage Castle 114
On the Caledonian Canal 116
Glencoe 121
"They staid at the pier nearly a quarter of an hour" . . 123
Castle Urquhart 134
Bran 139
"There was Uncle Duncan on the platform" . . . 145
"Birkie House" 152
"Good morning! Grand old man!" 161
Scotch Fishing-Boats 163
Balnagown Castle 170
"Glengower" 175
A Scotch Collie 179
"An old pedler was in the kitchen" 182
Street Scene in Tain, Market Day 184
Cromarty 191
"Some sheep their father had given them" 197
High Street, Tain 202
Ben Bhraggie 207
Cousin Wilhelmina's Cottage 213
Dunrobin Castle 221
Hugh Miller's Birthplace 225
Culloden Moor 228
Pass of Killiecrankie 230
Edinburgh Castle 234
Melrose Abbey 242
Abottsford 244
Stirling Castle 246
Ben Venue and Loch Achray 249
Grave of Rob Roy 253
Alloway Kirk 254
Lights of Greenock 260

MISS GRAY'S GIRLS.

CHAPTER I.

A DELIGHTFUL PIECE OF NEWS.

LETA BARROWS stood before the little dressing-case in her room at the Wellington Preparatory School, absently adjusting a white Tam O'Shanter to her abundant and fair tresses. She was thinking over the home letter

which the morning mail had brought her, and wondering what her mother had meant by a mysterious allusion to something pleasant in store for her daughter. It was

Leta's last year at the Preparatory, and in the fall she was to enter the great Women's College, not far distant, where the Wellington girls occasionally went to attend the fine musical and literary treats, which were sources of much culture to those thus privileged.

Leta had been a faithful student and would leave a good record behind her when she left the Wellington, where she had been a boarding pupil for three years. Her parents were greatly pleased at her progress, and the more so as the wise management of the Misses Dana brought about a state of perfect health in nearly every pupil committed to their charge; and Leta was one of the best specimens of the school physically as well as mentally. During a winter visit to Leta they had several private conversations with her favorite teacher, Miss Gray, who had charge of the classes in history and literature, studies in which Leta took special delight. Leta did not know the import of these conversations, but was happy in knowing that her dear teacher was on good terms with Mr. and Mrs. Barrows. It was considered best that nothing should be said to her concerning the pleasure in store until arrangements had been definitely made by Miss Gray, who was then to make known to Leta and her three "special friends" what had been planned by their parents for their summer vacation.

The four friends were known in school as "Miss Gray's Girls," as they were all devoted to the teacher whose enthusiasm in class work was not more helpful than her sisterly ways, which insured their perfect confidence.

Many delightful walks had the five taken together through the pretty scenery about their school, and many cosey Sunday night talks had been enjoyed in Miss Gray's cheerful room. Of late a little sadness had crept in upon their happiness, as the girls realized that an end to all this confidential relation as teacher and pupils was near at hand. Two of the girls would go to college, but of the other two one would return to her Western home, pursue music, and be her mother's companion in society, while the fourth was to take her place at the head of her father's house in Boston, her mother having been dead several years.

So the delightful tie that had bound them for two or three school years must at least be stretched—if not exactly broken. And who could tell what new ties might be formed when the girls no longer saw each other daily? Many plans were made for future intercourse. Visits should be exchanged, a circular letter should continually go its rounds between the four, and once a year they should have a reunion at the Wellington, with a grand talk in Miss Gray's room. Thus they would surely keep alive the old love of school days, no matter what new associates came into their lives. But yet a little cloud of doubt would at times throw a tiny shadow on all their cheerful hopes and plans.

Miss Gray always comforted her girls on such occasions, and led them to think of all the good life had yet in store for them. She promised to keep a warm corner in her heart for them, to which newcomers should never be admitted.

And now the spring vacation was close at hand, and the few remaining weeks would fly swiftly onward toward the close of school. The exercises attending Commencement at the great college would bring crowds of guests thither, and everything would look its loveliest in those June days. Then quiet would settle down upon the lawns and "academic groves" about the stately buildings of the college. The Preparatory School would be deserted by all save the matron and servants engaged in house-cleaning, and putting everything in order for a new year.

As Leta stood idly thinking of these things and the home visit of the following week, some one rapped at her door and recalled her to her present surroundings and the fact that she was dressing for her hour's exercise in the open air, and that it was time she was ready to start. She recognized the knock and called "Come!" in the affected brevity of college life, and at the same time sprang toward the door saying, "O Molly Stone, I'm awfully glad you've come. I'm just dying to talk over mamma's letter with you. She says you are to be sure to come home with me next week, and although she knows you would rather be going to your own mother, she will do her best to give you a mother's welcome — and lots more nice things, for mamma never omits saying and doing just the right things — though, as you know, her daughter is famous for *not* following her good example. But, Mollie, here's the letter and you can read it yourself — and do excuse me for a few minutes; I've got to run up the corridor with this French book to

Kate Robson. Sit down in my big chair and I'll be back soon." And off Leta flew in schoolgirl fashion, stopping on her way back at the door of another of the four friends to see if she was ready to go to walk. Number Three, in the person of Clare Brewster, was just drawing on her brown silk mittens as the finishing touch to her walking toilet.

"Leta, we are to meet Lizzie Tracey at the north door, and—do you know?—Miss Gray cannot walk with us to-day; she has important letters to write, and says she will just take a short promenade on the piazza after dinner this evening. But she has given Lizzie a message for us, and it's something very important—and nice too, by the way Liz looked when she told me where to meet her. So let's hurry up and get started. Where's Mollie?"

"Oh, dear! I left poor Mollie in my room while I did an errand, and here I have been listening to you when I ought to have rushed back to her. We will be at the north door in two minutes. *Au revoir!*"

In a short time all four girls were wending their way through the driveway to the village street, chattering gayly as to what direction their walk should lead them.

"Let's go by the Brook Road," said Leta. "It's so quiet there we can talk as much as we like, and if any of us should faint over Lizzie's piece of news, no one would see us in the predicament."

"Yes; and do let us be quiet immediately and give Liz a chance to hold forth," said Clare. "Ladies, I have

the pleasure of introducing to you Miss Elizabeth Tracey of New York, who will speak to you on a matter that deeply concerns your welfare"; and, with a wave of her brown-mittened hand and a little bow, Clare stepped aside and took Leta's arm, while Lizzie linked her arm in Mollie's, and the quartet moved on in close phalanx.

"Well, children," began Lizzie, "I do believe you will think it the loveliest plan. I am wild over it myself, and could hardly keep my mind on my lessons to-day. Miss Gray told me last evening after essay class —"

"Oh, do hurry, Liz dear! Tell us quickly what this wonderful news is."

"I am trying to as hard as I can," went on Lizzie; "but, you see, it's so superb I must make a few introductory remarks as all the great speakers do. But I'll try to 'out with it'; so now listen! You know at the close of essay last evening Miss Gray asked me to remain a few minutes, and I staid, thinking it was something about my history thesis. Then, when all the others had gone, she asked me if I had any more studying to do that evening; and I told her my lessons for the first two periods to-day were all done. So she said I must stay and talk over a little plan of hers for half an hour. Of course I was delighted to talk with Miss Gray, but I wondered why she did not keep the other three. But Miss Gray said she thought I could tell you all about it, and she could only spare a little time last evening, and if we were all there she would be inclined to talk the subject over at too great length. Now, can you imagine what 'the subject' is?"

"No."

"Do tell us!"

"What is it?" came in quick succession.

"Well, it is this: Miss Gray intends taking a trip to Europe this summer and wants to take us four girls with her."

"Oh, glorious!"

"Will our fathers let us go?"

"That's what mamma meant in her letter," said Leta. "I knew it must be some nice plan, but never dreamed of its being *Europe*. Just think of seeing all the lovely ruins and palaces, and everything we've had in history and literature, with Miss Gray to quote interesting references. Oh, won't it be magnificent?

> 'The splendor falls on castle walls,
> And snowy summits old in story.'

"O girls, I want to shout 'Hosanna!'" exclaimed Leta, so truly thankful that her seemingly irreverent exclamation was pardonable.

"And what do you think that lovely woman has done before ever mentioning the thing to us?" continued Lizzie, as soon as there was a pause. "She has discussed the matter with our parents and got the consent of every one of our fathers, and she has even secured staterooms for the fifteenth of June. And she is going right on now making all the necessary arrangements — and isn't it just *perfect?*"

Lizzie paused, and a brief silence fell upon the group,

who almost stood still in the excitement of the moment.

"I'm so thankful that it will soon be vacation and we can go home and talk it all over; aren't you, girls?"

To this question of Leta's all assented, and then the village clock struck five, and the girls recovered themselves sufficiently to realize that they had made small headway in their walk and must hasten in order to reach their rooms in time to prepare for dinner at half-past five. So, chatting eagerly, but at the same time with brisk footsteps, they pursued their way.

Parting in the upper hall, each went to her own little room, which, according to Miss Judith Dana's theories on the subject, was allotted to every girl who had been one year or more in the boarding department. In this way privacy for study and entire responsibility of the room were secured to the elder girls, and very good results came about. As each girl closed her door on this evening and found herself alone with her thoughts, it was a difficult matter to proceed calmly to smoothing locks and otherwise preparing for dinner.

Elizabeth, who had carried the charming secret about with her all day, to say nothing of having accomplished a night's sleep with it on her mind, was now naturally the calmest of the four. Her parents and elder sister had been abroad several times, and she knew something of the hardships of travel as well as its rosy side. The prospect of spending three months with Miss Gray and the girls made the trip a most attractive one even to the

somewhat initiated New York maiden, who could already tell at what shops on the other side Americans liked best to trade, and who had heard many stories about the odd mistakes they sometimes make. Elizabeth's parents had often rehearsed their adventures in her hearing, and friends who had been abroad had added their stories while visiting at her home.

To the other three girls the prospect was most exciting, especially to Clare and Leta, with their New England trend of thought and intense ways of regarding historic and literary matters. New Englanders seem to inherit a desire to "know all about" the subjects they read of and study, to see for themselves the *Old* England, which always seems to be their ancestral home. A trip to Europe, therefore, especially to the British Isles, is a sort of pilgrimage to a Holy Land for the men and women who have received their education in New England schools and colleges. Many are willing to undergo any privation for the sake of seeing the wonderful treasures of Art, Antiquity, and Romance of which they have so long dreamed. Mollie was so devoted to Miss Gray, and had visited so often at Leta's Vermont home, that she had an equal interest with Leta in the books they read together. She would carry to her Western home many New England traits which her residence at the Wellington had helped her to acquire. It was, therefore, a very appreciative party that Miss Gray was to chaperon during her trip abroad. Knowing the tastes and capacities of her girls so well, she laid out the journey for their special delight and benefit.

As yet, however, she had not of course explained her line of march. That would come in good time, and even if they did not know their exact itinerary until they were on the steamer, there would be plenty of opportunity then for studying maps and guidebooks. Besides, Miss Gray had been over most of the ground before, and they could trust to her that everything should prove delightful. Her class instruction was always fascinating to her pupils, she seemed to take so much pleasure in making everything vivid and clear.

We left the girls preparing for dinner, and as the "ten minutes bell" sounded through the halls it startled at least three of them into a more vigorous effort, and they soon left their rooms for the dining-room, meeting one another in the corridor.

Clare spoke first and said, "O girls! I've had a letter from papa this evening,—the mail was distributed while we were out,—and he says he supposes I know by this time that he has decided to let his precious 'Lady Clare' go away and leave him this summer. And—isn't it lovely?—he thinks he will come over and join us some time in August and travel with us a little, and perhaps he can arrange to return when we do. I am too happy for anything!"

Clare's fair face wore a rosy tinge of happiness at the prospect of sharing her summer with the father, who was doubly dear to his motherless daughter.

"O Clare, how lovely for you! I rather wish all our fathers were going," said Leta, as a flood of home

thoughts came over her and Europe looked for the moment very far away, even with the girls and Miss Gray for companions.

"O Leta, you will want to take the whole family if you begin to feel that way," said Mollie; "and that would not be half so nice as just going like a party of students with our teacher and studying up everything we see. It will be such fun, too, when we return, to tell our families all about it. And the letters we shall get from home will keep us from being homesick. I'm going to be brave and make up my mind not to be homesick, and so must all of us."

"Yes, children," remarked Elizabeth, "you will all need to be as brave as you can. Just wait till it comes to saying good-by on the steamer and making up your mind to live two or three weeks without knowing a thing that the home people are doing and saying, and then you will wish everybody you love was going too. The first time my father and mother left us to go abroad was a very tearful occasion; and how we waited for the first letter to come! And mamma wrote that it seemed ages to her since she kissed us good-by, and she had thought of a thousand dreadful things that might happen to us."

This conversation had made the group a little grave, and they had gathered into an alcove of the hall. They were presently joined by several other girls, who suggested that dinner would be served in another minute; so they hastened to the dining-room. There they had to separate, as Elizabeth sat at the French table as

Mademoiselle's opposite. She had learned French as a child at a day school in New York, and spoke the language very well. Leta and Clare assisted respectively Miss Judith and Miss Lucia, the principals; while Mollie occupied the seat of responsibility opposite Miss Nelson, the resident music teacher.

The dining-room at the Wellington contained five tables, each seating ten or a dozen girls and a teacher, and presented a very cheerful scene at meal time. Girls who at first were a little inclined to be homesick soon learned to contribute their share to the pleasant hum of girlish voices. They saw that everything was planned for their comfort, and felt that their teachers were striving to fill as far as possible their parents' places.

On this evening the girls were particularly lively. Most of them had received letters concerning the coming vacation. There was, therefore, plenty of such news as schoolgirls love to talk over, and every one was interested in her neighbor's plans. Some had invitations to spend their holidays with friends; others had received permission from home to bring a schoolmate home with them.

Miss Gray, who in addition to her other requirements was a fine German scholar, had charge of a table at which the conversation was carried on in that language. Her table was in a small room just off the main dining-room, so she was separated at meal time from her girls. They could hardly control their impatience on the evening of which we are speaking, they longed so much to have a few minutes' talk with her.

As soon as dinner was over they hastened to meet her at the door of her dining-room, and took possession of her for a little walk on the veranda. What a bright look she gave them! And how many questions they wanted to ask! But all they could think of to say was,

"O Miss Gray, how good you are! When will you have time to tell us all about it?" Then each girl put her arms around Miss Gray and gave her a kiss that contained a world of gratitude.

After a moment Miss Gray said, "Come with me while I take a little exercise in the open air and I will tell you as much as I have time for." And she put her hand in Leta's and drew her toward the hall door. The other three followed with arms about each other's waists.

As they walked up and down the piazza Miss Gray

said, "I have been thinking about this trip with you for some months, but would not speak of it to you until it was a certainty. Your parents have been very kind about it and have reposed great confidence in me, leaving the selection of routes entirely to me. They think I know so well what you can best appreciate that I will take you to just the right places. I think you will be pleased when I tell where I have decided to go, because most of the localities have come up in literature and history classes."

"We are sure to be pleased with any plan of yours, Miss Gray," said Leta, giving Miss Gray's hand a little squeeze as she spoke. "Can't we have a meeting in your room before we leave for vacation, so that you can tell us more about the journey; or are you too busy?"

"Time is unusually precious just now, but I will plan to get an hour or two to explain our line of travel; for I know your friends will ask you many questions about it, and my girls must be able to give a clear account of what we hope to do. Can you all come to my room Saturday evening after dinner?"

The girls all agreed to be there, and then Miss Gray said, "Now I must go to my work. Don't forget to come and say good-night to me."

The five went indoors, and, after escorting Miss Gray to the door of her room, the girls went to get their books for study hour in the schoolroom.

CHAPTER II.

ALL ABOUT IT.

Just before lunch on Saturday, Clare and Leta tapped at Miss Gray's door. Upon entering Leta said, "Miss Gray, Clare has such a nice idea about your talk this evening that I made her come to tell you about it; and do please say yes — will you not?"

"If I possibly can," said Miss Gray cheerfully. "What is it, Clare?"

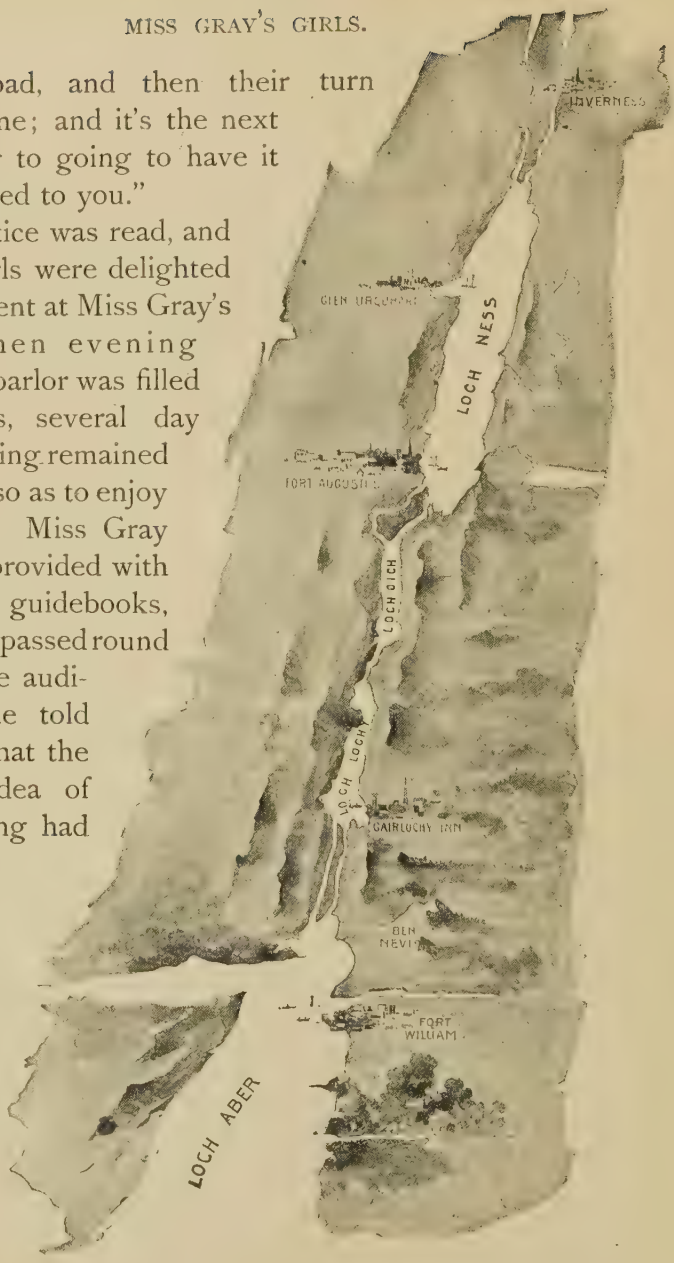
"Well, I thought, Miss Gray, that the other girls would like to hear your talk about Europe, and I wondered if you would give it in the parlor and let the girls all come," said Clara.

Miss Gray hesitated a moment and then said, "I have not had time to prepare anything like a lecture. You must not have the girls think it is a Stoddard matinée, if you ask them to come. It will be only an informal talk, and answering of any questions that may be asked concerning the ground we are to go over this summer. If the girls care to hear such a conversation, I shall be glad to have as many present as like to come."

"Oh, thank you!" said Clare. "Will you have a notice read at lunch, so the girls will know about it? I know they will like to come, because several of the girls have said they hoped you would continue to take parties of

girls abroad, and then their turn would come; and it's the next best thing to going to have it all described to you."

The notice was read, and all the girls were delighted to be present at Miss Gray's talk. When evening came the parlor was filled with girls, several day pupils having remained to dinner so as to enjoy the treat. Miss Gray was well provided with maps and guidebooks, which she passed round among the audience. She told the girls that the original idea of the meeting had been to explain to the party of girls who were to accompany her during the



summer vacation the route to be pursued; therefore she would have to speak of the steamer in which they would cross the ocean, its destination, and various preparations that had to be made. She had selected a safe and reliable line, and taken staterooms in that ship of the line which best suited their convenience as to date of sailing. Of course there are many preferences in regard to what steamer to take for a European trip; but nearly all the first-class passenger ships are commodious, and

with a pleasant company of one's own the voyage is sure to be enjoyable.

The steamer selected was the *Circassia* of the Anchor Line, running between New York and Glasgow, at which city a few days would be spent. The party would then proceed to Oban, a famous resort for tourists. The scenery in this locality is varied and delightful. From Oban there was to be a charming excursion to the islands of Iona and Staffa, the first celebrated in the religious

history of the past, the latter for its great natural wonder, Fingal's Cave.

After a few days in Oban and vicinity they were to have the lovely journey through the Caledonian Canal to Inverness.

"If those of you who have maps will look for this canal, you will see that it cuts Scotland in two, and that when you have come to Inverness you are pretty far north."

"At Inverness," continued Miss Gray, "there are the most delightful 'shops,' as the English and Scotch always say. You can buy most beautiful clan tartans, that is, the Scotch plaids worn by the old clans, or tribes, of Scotch Highlanders. They are rather expensive, but very bewitching. When I was there some years ago I found it impossible to resist purchasing enough for a dress. You remember seeing me wear it, I dare say."

"Oh, yes; that lovely rich green-and-purple plaid with the little green velvet jacket. We always admired you in it," said Clare.

"There are exquisite photographs at Inverness, as well as Scotch pebble jewelry, and all kinds of pretty souvenirs. The photographs in Scotland are unusually fine, perhaps owing in some way to the soft atmosphere. My friend and I were so fascinated by those we saw in the shop windows at Inverness that we kept going into the shops and looking them over, and adding to our store, when we should have been exploring the town." Miss Gray gave a little smile which seemed called up by

some amusing recollections of the fair capital of the Highlands.

"You know, perhaps," went on Miss Gray, "that my father is a native of Scotland, and so everything pertaining to that country is dear to me. I think the time I spent there has sweeter associations than that spent in any part of Europe which I have yet seen. It is a wonderful country with a wonderful people, both famous in history and literature. Many of the gems of poetry come from the pens of humble Scotch poets. The men of Scotland have been famous as warriors and martyrs and scholars. For these reasons, as well as because I love the country myself, I wish to take you first to 'bonnie Scotland.' I have numerous relatives who live in Scotland and who all made me promise to come and see them again. Hospitality is one of the best known of Scotch virtues. So when I wrote to my favorite uncle that I was planning to take 'my girls' to Europe, I received the most cordial letter from him and his wife insisting that I should bring 'all the lassies' to his home. There was plenty of room, his house was large, and he wanted to see how American lassies would compare with Scotch lassies. Dear Aunt Jessie added her own message and said, 'You know well that we Scotch bodies have big hearts, though we may not always speak them out. But what we say we mean, and you and your lassies will be very welcome.' So I wrote back that if my girls' parents were willing we should all present ourselves as claimants of their Highland hospitality. This trip still

farther north in the Highlands will give you an unusual opportunity to see just how the Scotch live in their own land. What do you think of it?"

A little murmur of surprised delight came from the assembly, and Leta was the first to make an intelligible reply. She said, "What big hearts people in Scotland must have, Miss Gray! The very idea of inviting five people, four of them strangers, to one's home! I think it is just too splendid to be true."

"So do I," said Mollie, "but it's just what you would expect an uncle of Miss Gray's to do. Don't you remember how lovely her father and mother were to us when we went home with her last winter? Talk about Western hospitality! I think New England is far ahead on that score."

"I remember hearing mamma and papa speak of the lovely way they were entertained both in England and Scotland," said Elizabeth. "Mamma said nobody seemed to think it a burden to entertain over there. She thought it was partly because the servants know their work so well that it takes the burden off the hostess. And guests always give a little money to the servants before leaving; so they are sure that they will be rewarded for extra trouble, and do all they can for the visitor's comfort."

"Why, Clare has not said a word," said Mollie. "What are you thinking about, Clare?"

Clare had a happy flush on her cheeks and an almost misty look in her eyes. She was impressed by the kind-

ness of these far-away friends and was busy with her thoughts. Deep thoughts were often with Clare akin to tears, and never to speech.

After a little general chatter among the girls, Miss Gray went on talking of the journey.

"We shall spend perhaps three weeks in Ross-shire, where my uncle lives, and I want you to meet as many of the people there as possible. You will find it very interesting to see their homes, and modes of life. It is a great thing for us Americans to realize that there are people whose habits differ so much from ours and who yet are cultivated, Christian people. We may come home glad at heart that we are daughters of America, with all the blessed privileges that the words imply; still we shall have broadened our minds, and I hope our hearts, by seeing something of life in the Old World. It is when we truly realize how long the customs of the people of the other hemisphere have endured that we feel that in our very new world it is just possible that mistakes may be occasionally made, and that there are some things we may learn by observation. — But I must not preach too long a sermon from this text or you will become impatient. As we turn to come south, after our visit in Ross, you will see by looking at the maps that we shall again come to Inverness, where we shall spend a few hours, and possibly stay over night. A little way beyond Inverness we pass Culloden Moor, a famous battleground, where in the year 1746 the Highland clans who were fighting for

Prince Charlie were terribly defeated. You will remember that we had an interesting discussion about the 'Young Pretender' in our English history."

"And very nearly had a declaration of war between those who liked him and those who thought he ought to have been defeated," said Mollie.

"The scenery all the way down to Edinburgh is very fine," continued Miss Gray, looking at her watch, "and we shall have to hasten through, just glancing at the map to see how many 'Bens,' or mountains, are in sight. The mist and shadow effects on these hills and intervening moors are very fine to see. You will notice that the railway runs along the Pass of Killiecrankie. Here another famous battle was fought during the reign of William and Mary in 1689. The Highlanders were successful in this battle, though their leader, Viscount Dundee, was shot at the moment of victory. It is said he was shot by a silver button. His death discouraged his followers so that the effects of the victory were lost. We shall probably take the afternoon train for this trip to Edinburgh, and shall be at Perth in time to get tea at the fine railway station where the Queen is accustomed to breakfast on her way to her Highland home, Balmoral Castle. It will be nearly midnight when we reach Edinburgh. You will be glad of a good night's rest after your long ride, so full of sights that you will not wish to doze in your seats, but will constantly crowd to the windows for the view. In the morning you will be delighted to behold the magnificent buildings of the

'Athens of the North' as they gradually emerge from the clinging robes of murky smoke that envelop them. I shall never forget my first morning view in this grand city. How my eyes feasted first on the Lion's form crouched on the summit of Arthur's Seat, then on the monuments of the Calton Hill, and again on the stern crag crowned by Edinburgh Castle! I know you will be

delighted with it all, and there will be no end to the photographs and etchings you will wish to secure. But we have no idea how fast the time is passing, and I shall have to tell you very hastily about the rest of the journey. Edinburgh requires a week of the traveller's time at the very least. There are so many places of historic interest in the city itself, beside the numerous excursions that can be made from it. From here we shall go to the Trossachs

for a few days, and there, you know, you will find the beautiful scenes described in the 'Lady of the Lake.' You must not forget to put your little copies of that poem into your trunks."

"I should like to get a copy somewhere in Scotland," said Leta; "it would seem so much more real to me afterward to see my name written on the fly-leaf, with 'Scotland' and the date when I got it written after it."

"Yes; and we could get small photographs of the places to paste in and illustrate it, the way Miss Gray did with those stories of William Black's. O girls! do you realize how *perfect* it's going to be?" and Mollie gave Leta and Clare, who sat on either side of her, a hug, expressive of her ecstatic feelings of anticipation.

Miss Gray laughed as she replied to a question from Mademoiselle, who had just stepped into the parlor, and said: "Yes, they are a very appreciative company, 'my girls,' and I think their enthusiasm and good health will make the trials of travelling quite insignificant. But seriously, girls, there come a great many occasions, when a party are travelling together, for self-control, and consideration for others; and failure in these respects spoils a trip otherwise delightful. I think we can trust each other, however, if we always keep in mind the motto we have adopted in our school life, '*In honor preferring one another*.'

"And now just a few minutes are left before the bell for 'silent time' will strike, and I can only give you the briefest outline of the rest of our journey. We shall

provide ourselves with Cook's tickets as far as Edinburgh. From there we can get tickets in any direction we may wish to go. Of course, we shall go to Melrose and Dryburgh Abbeys, and to Abbotsford, built by brave, honorable, defeated Walter Scott, whom we all learn to love when we study his simple, upright, manly life. We ought to spend two or three days at Melrose, the scenery is all so closely associated with Scott. But all this we can arrange when we find ourselves there and see how charming it all is."

"I do hope papa will be able to join us in Edinburgh or for some of our excursion from there," said Clare. "I think by that time I shall have so much to tell him that a letter will not hold it all. I feel already as if I had become a traveller, and had gone a long distance from home. I hope I shall be a good one and not get homesick."

"Oh, you won't, Clare," said Mollie quickly. "Everything will be so new and interesting your mind will be all taken up."

"We ought to keep notebooks, I suppose," said Leta.

"To be sure," answered Elizabeth; "everybody does, or at least everybody begins one, even if he never finishes it. But mamma says it is well worth while to stick to it, even if one does feel too tired sometimes to write it up, it is such a pleasure afterward to read it over. There are lots of amusing things that one forgets, and the notebook brings them all back. We used to coax mamma to read hers to us, it was so entertaining."

"I should certainly advise keeping notebooks," said

Miss Gray, "and putting down what you think and what you experience. It is not worth while to write out descriptions of buildings, or statistics of cities, because the guidebooks tell you all such things very clearly; but it *is* worth while to describe the appearance of a certain mountain as it was while you looked at it, because this will be your special experience, and as you read it the lovely picture will come back. Without the words of description it would only be indefinite in your memory."

"Shall you keep a notebook too, Miss Gray?" asked Dora Trowbridge, one of the girls who had been listening eagerly to all that had been said.

"I always do," said Miss Gray.

"Oh! then you will read yours to us when we come back to school, will you not?" said Dora.

"Oh, please, Miss Gray!" came the request from a half-dozen girls in chorus. Miss Gray smiled her assent; she was pretty sure to do anything in her power to instruct and at the same time please her girl friends.

"And now, my dear girls, I must thank you for so kindly listening to my rather mixed and hurried talk this evening, hoping to be able in future to give you a more finished account of the places we have but touched on to-night. I have a number of copies of a list of things needed for the voyage, which I will give into Elizabeth's charge, so that any who wish them can get them from her. I hope you may all need to make use of the list one of these days, for I know how much pleasure and profit it will bring into your lives. You are now excused."

Most of the girls took Miss Gray's hand in passing out and thanked her for a pleasant evening. They would have lingered to talk a little longer but the bell for "silent time" sounded, footsteps were heard passing quickly over hall and stair, doors opened and shut, and then the whole household was still.

CHAPTER III.

SPRING VACATION.

On Monday the spring vacation began. At an early hour trunks and girls were to be seen rolling away toward the station. Leta and Mollie were among the early ones, as they wished to take a morning train from Boston to Leta's home. Clare went at the same time, taking with her two of the younger girls, little daughters of a missionary far away in India. These children had no relatives near enough to go to for a short vacation, so it was a delight to accept Clare's kind invitation.

Mr. Brewster was waiting in the depot in Boston,

and had carriages secured for himself and the girls. He offered to go with Leta to assist about tickets and trunk checks, but she was a good traveller, and had a quiet, business-like way of attending to all details. She assured Mr. Brewster with thanks that she could get on very well alone.

"Besides," she said, "there is poor Clare, so anxious to talk over everything with you. I could not take her papa away from her another minute."

So the good-bys were said and Clare, with her little friends and her dear papa, was soon being whirled through the quiet streets of the Back Bay and stopping before a stately house with "Brewster" on the door. Very pleasant was the welcome they all received from Aunt Anna, Mr. Brewster's widowed sister, who made her home with him until Clare should be out of school. She gave the little guests an especially warm greeting, with a thought of their mother who could not see them for so

long a time, and took them herself to the pretty room near Clare's, which they were to occupy. In her own pink-tinted chamber Clare found a lovely new tea-gown, which was Auntie's gift, and which seemed deliciously fresh and comfortable after removing her travelling-dress. Then breakfast was announced, and we will leave the happy party, thus pleasantly started on their vacation.

Meanwhile Leta and Mollie have set out on their railway journey to the pleasant Vermont village where Leta's charming country home is situated. Their early rising had made them a little weary, and they spent the hours in alternate intervals of chatting and dozing until a junction was reached, where the train remained some time, and the passengers alighted and gathered round the lunch counters. As they neared the station Leta exclaimed, "There's my Cousin Phil! He's looking for us. And—yes, there's his chum, Mr. Thayer, with him. Let us hurry and get out. They will go on home with us."

As soon as the girls emerged from the car door they were discovered by Phil, who, with his friend, came forward to assist them down.

"Have you been home, or are you, like us, only on the way?" said Leta.

"Oh, we came up on Saturday, and, as they told us you were coming to-day, we thought we would come down and meet you. We want to talk over your European trip with you. Hal and I and a couple of

other fellows are planning for a run across as soon as college closes."

"How splendid!" said Leta.

"Where are you going, and when?" said Mollie.

"Well, two of our fellows are studying German, and they want to go on a Nord-Deutscher; and we all want to get off as near the middle of June as we can. But come, girls, you must be hungry and thirsty, and in need of refreshment"; and Phil led the way to the lunch counter, followed by the party, all chatting gayly. As the girls disclosed their plans for the summer outing, the boys expressed their approval, regretting that they could not join Miss Gray's party, especially for the Scottish Highlands.

Hal fairly groaned when he heard of the Caledonian Canal.

"But you will have the Rhine, and the Mouse Tower, and Heidelberg, and the Lorelei Rock; and if you take your walking tour you'll have the Alps — and little boys must not want everything they hear of," said Leta reprovingly.

So with an air of mock humility Hal replied, "No, ma'am; I suppose not. I'll try to be content with my share of the earth; still, 'My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.'"

With much to talk about and four happy young people to do the talking, the remainder of the journey was soon accomplished. Leta's father was at the station, also her younger brother and sister. They gave the girls

a hearty greeting, the children being especially fond of Mollie. Trunks having been found and given in charge of the village expressman, the girls got into the roomy family carriage, and, waving good-by to Phil and Hal, who had already set out to walk, they were soon driving up to the doorway, where Mrs. Barrows was waiting with a motherly greeting for both the schoolgirls. She had that morning received a letter from Mollie's mother containing a little note for her daughter, and expressing a mother's gratitude for Mrs. Barrows's kind invitation for the holidays. The message from her own home made Mollie feel very cheerful, and indeed she had for some time called Leta's home her "Eastern home," so cordial was the greeting she always received there.

CHAPTER IV.

GETTING READY.

The vacation passed all too swiftly, as vacations will, and the girls soon found themselves at school again and busy with all the tasks and pleasures of school life. Their walks were now through roads where every tree was unfolding a wealth of buds, and where, at every step, grew, fresh and dainty, some darling of the spring. The boats had been brought out of winter quarters, and often the

girls and Miss Gray took their exercise upon the lake, which was within easy walking distance. Of course the chief subject of conversation was the summer trip, and the girls had pet projects which they hoped to carry out.

"I'm just going to ask papa to make me a special allowance for photographs," announced Mollie. "You know, girls, I shall have to go way off West when I come back, and I shall hardly know there is an Atlantic Ocean or any Europe."

"Your impressions of the Atlantic may be so vivid you'll never forget just how it looked and how you felt," said Elizabeth, with a little gleam of mischief.

"Oh, I'm not going to be seasick, if that's what you mean," said Mollie with a superior air.

"I shall try to make a collection of flowers and leaves from all the places we visit, and mount them in an album after I get back. I once saw one that a lady had made, and it was lovely. She had put the date when she gathered it, and a little quotation with each one." This was Clare's project, always dainty in her tastes and a bit sentimental.

"Well, I want to go rowing on Loch Katrine and land on Ellen's Isle and the Silver Strand. Don't you think we can do that, Miss Gray?"

"Yes, Leta, I think we can easily manage it, and a very delightful experience it would be," said Miss Gray. "When I was taking the Trossachs tour before, I made up my mind that it should be a rowboat and not a steamer that should take me over Loch Katrine if I ever found

myself there again. A charming couple, Germans, were at *table d'hôte* with us at the Trossachs Hotel, and when we took the coach next morning to the pier we passed them walking toward the same place. Before we had embarked and got under way this couple had secured a little row-boat and started to explore the beauties of the lake at their own sweet will. We exchanged greetings as we passed, and afterward saw them landing at a pretty spot, and then we lost sight of them. But I have never forgotten how happy they looked, nor how much I wished to be able to follow their example."

"What do you most want to do in Europe, Liz dear?" asked Clare.

The five were gliding slowly over the lake in their favorite little white boat *The Princess*, and Elizabeth was pulling leisurely while Miss Gray held the tiller cords. Elizabeth rested on her oars as she considered her reply. Then she said, "I don't believe I have any hobby, but I think Europe will be very satisfactory. I shall rather like the new sensations and impressions we shall get. I think I shall just take everything as it comes, and trust that the result will be general culture and improvement, — and I know I shall be happy with you all. Perhaps I shall develop an enthusiasm on the journey." Elizabeth plied her oars a little more zealously as she glanced at her watch, and Miss Gray steered for the landing pier.

The weeks sped rapidly on to the beginning of June. Miss Gray and the girls made several shopping

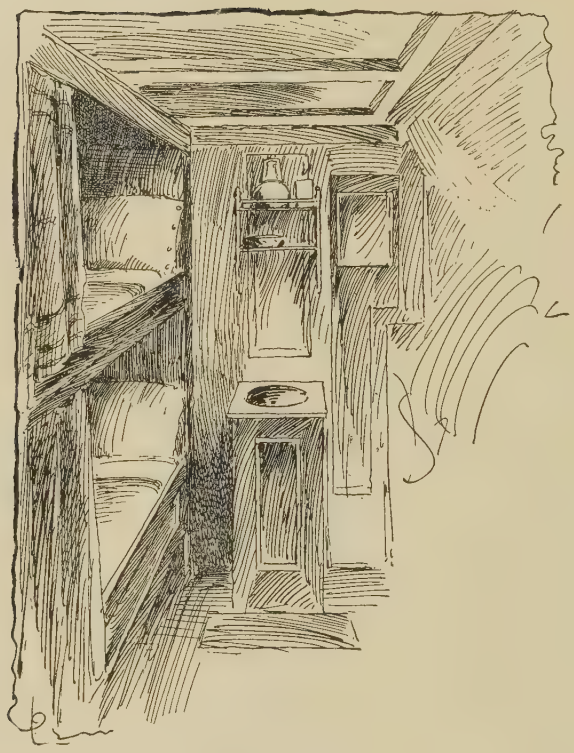
excursions to Boston, where, on one occasion, they were joined by Aunt Anna and Mrs. Barrows. Mollie's mother was going on to New York a week before the time of sailing and would there get things in readiness for Mollie and procure steamer chairs for the party. Miss Gray advised each girl to have a small steamer trunk of her own for the voyage. She told the story of a party of eight girls and a chaperon who had once made the return trip with her, and who had all their steamer outfits stowed in one large trunk. By some mistake the trunk was put into the hold, although labelled for the cabin; and great was the inconvenience of the whole party, who made much lamentation, as for some time they feared it had been lost before reaching the ship. Great, also, was the rejoicing which took place when the trunk was restored to its owners, and great the relief experienced by steward, stewardess, and neighboring fellow-passengers, as the wail of distress in nine different keys was changed to a song of rejoicing.

School closed the twelfth of June, but Miss Gray and her girls left a few days earlier, having made special effort to finish all their work in time. Mollie went on to join her mother in New York, so she and Elizabeth started together. Clare and Leta went to their own homes for a few days of quiet before the journey began. They were to join Miss Gray in Boston and go on by boat the night of the thirteenth, thus having a day in New York.

Mr. Brewster and Aunt Anna, Mr. and Mrs. Barrows,

also Phil's father and mother, went on with the party. A number of Miss Gray's friends, and several of the schoolgirls who lived in the vicinity, were at the station in Boston to wish good-by to the travellers.

"If all the good wishes I have received are realized, I shall have cause to be a very thankful girl," said Leta, "and we shall all have a very *bon voyage* indeed."



CHAPTER V.

GOOD-BY!

THE day in the great metropolis of the New World was a fitting prelude of days that were to be spent in the cities of the Old World. It was crowded with sight-seeing and visiting, and night found a very weary party

gathered around a private tea-table at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. As the steamer sailed at half past seven in the morning, Miss Gray thought it best that herself and charge should pass the night on board, the hotel party coming down in the morning for the leave-taking. Accordingly, about eight in the evening the gentlemen, including Miss Gray's brother, who had come over from Brooklyn, escorted the voyagers to their "home on the rolling deep," as Clare called the steamer. Everything was noise and confusion about the ship, although it was so late. Clanking machinery was at work lowering trunk after trunk into the hold. The night was very warm, and not a breath of air was to be had in the sheltered position occupied by the vessel.

"You will get very little sleep to-night, I fear," said Leta's father. "I almost regret that we did not keep you all at the hotel."

However, the staterooms assigned to the party looked very clean and inviting, and it would be much better to wake up in their little white berths on the morrow and put on their steamer attire for the day — or for as much of it as they were able to be up and about. Some fifteen minutes later Elizabeth and her father arrived. It had been decided that, as they lived so far out of the city, she would best stay over night with the rest. Her mother had come in with them as far as the hotel, where they had left her to find the other ladies, and where she and her husband would spend the night, so as to be on hand early the following morning. Their beautiful home was in the

vicinity of Central Park, and the three girls had been out there to lunch during the day, going afterward through the Metropolitan Museum and for a drive about the park. On their return to the hotel they had ridden on the top of the stage, to prepare them, as Miss Gray said, for that kind of riding when they reached Europe. About ten the gentlemen said good night, and the girls settled down for the night, unpacking some of the contents of their trunks and preparing to get what sleep they could.

At half past five they were up and dressing, so as to be out on deck and watch for their friends, who all arrived in good time. There was nearly an hour for partings to be exchanged before the visitors were warned on shore. The party divided into little family groups, where words

came slowly and subdued, and a few tears fell as each thought of what might happen while separated from one another. All made an effort to be cheerful at the last, and the general excitement of getting off and watching

the crowd upon the wharf absorbed all tender thoughts for the time. The girls and their teacher stood close together watching the waving of their special group until faces on shore grew too distant to be any longer distinguished. Then they looked about for their chairs, and tried to realize that they were actually under way. Presently the breakfast bell rang long and loud, and they began the first of their days at sea. At Miss Gray's suggestion the girls were to keep the account of their voyage alternately; that is, each should keep the log a day at a time. If any one should be too ill to do her day's writing, some one else would do it for her, and later she could return the favor. As it was a first voyage for all the girls, they would find many new and interesting things to write about; and if all took part in telling the story, the result would doubtless be more varied and spicy than one alone would make it. They had procured a neat book with flexible covers for the journal, and each girl was provided with a "stylo" which had proved itself trusty and true.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE ATLANTIC.

THE record of the first few days of an ocean voyage is, in most cases, hardly worth writing, or, if written, proves rather a sorry tale. Although suffering from the usual malady, each girl bravely strove to accomplish her task of recording the events of the day; and so the journal "began at the beginning," as Mollie said. Miss Gray always gave up the first two days to being, as she described it, "gloriously seasick," and declared she felt

all the better for it during the rest of the voyage. Mollie, who had held out valiantly against the insinuations of her friends, was the first to succumb and be assisted to go below. Then Leta and Elizabeth concluded that, discretion being the better part of valor, they would also retire to their stateroom and keep Mollie company. Clare, whose general air of delicacy would hardly warrant the supposition, proved the best sailor of the lot, and was a ministering angel to the sufferers, reading to them, dispensing chipped ice, and bringing them bits of news from table and deck.

However, by the third day all were able to make a proper ship toilet and appear in the upper world, — all save Mollie, whose courage was slow in returning, and who, it must be confessed, crept dolefully up to a sunny corner clad in her blanket gown. A half-hour of sunlight and clear air, combined with the chit-chat of the deck, restored Mollie's spirits, and the girls began to revel in their "life on the ocean wave." As they sipped the delicious beef tea which the stewardess graciously distributed among the convalescents, Mollie leaned back luxuriously in her steamer chair and said: "Girls, I take it all back; life *is* worth living, and I'm glad I came."

But she could not be prevailed upon to go down to lunch, and so ate a frugal meal on deck, insisting, however, that the rest should go. During the afternoon she astonished them by announcing that she was going down to dress for dinner. The sea breezes had done their work, and Mollie appeared at table with well-brushed

locks and wearing a distracting little blouse which she had unearthed from her steamer trunk.

The party had seats at the captain's table, where they found very agreeable neighbors, with whom they soon felt quite well acquainted. Most of the cabin passengers were foreigners, — Scotch, English, and Irish people returning to their homes after pleasure or business trips to the United States. Many of them had been in Egypt and India, and were very well-bred people, whose conversation the girls found highly instructive. It seemed as if their life abroad had really begun on the steamer. The American element was also a pleasant one, being composed largely of professional people about to spend their summer vacation in acquiring knowledge either by study or observation. Miss Gray felt pleased that the surroundings were so fortunate for her girls. The girls themselves were very attractive to their foreign fellow-travellers, who were mildly astonished at their bright American way of getting the most out of everything. At the same time it was very apparent that these girls were not wanting in the gentleness of manner that belongs to true womanhood.

Many pleasant conversations took place in the corner of the deck where the group was usually to be found. Numerous questions were asked concerning the journal at which some one of the girls was so often at work. Requests were made for a look into it, but these were gently and firmly refused on the plea, "We all own the book, you know, and I would not dare to let you read what

belongs to the rest." The decision was inevitable, but not a few wondered if there might not be another and more personal reason.

Elizabeth was something of an artist, and could make rapid and very good sketches. It was decided to devote an occasional page to an illustration "by our special artist"; and the book was fast becoming, as Mollie termed it, "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." Mr. Barrows had told the girls that, if they would do their work well and keep their notes faithfully, he would have a small edition printed for distribution among their friends and schoolmates. As some very pleasing friendships had been formed on board, which all hoped would prove permanent, the girls agreed among themselves to send copies to certain addresses. We will transcribe one of Leta's "days," for the benefit of those whose address is not known.

CHAPTER VII.

LETA'S STORY OF A DAY.

S. S. CIRCASSIA,
Latitude 42° 41′; Longitude 48° 12′.

THE morning is lovely! Fleecy clouds are floating in a blue sky, and the water seems to dance in appreciation of so much beauty. We are sitting as usual in "Cosey Corner," where our friends have learned to look for us; that is, as I write, Mollie, Elizabeth, and I are here, but Clare has gone with Mr. Laighton to the steamer's bow to watch her cutting through the water. It is a fascinating thing to look at. I went down yesterday with Miss Gray and two of our table friends. We stayed till we were chilled through, the breeze is so fresh down there. We had to pass through the steerage, and the people all seemed to be enjoying themselves, squatting round on the deck in the sunlight. Miss Gray is down visiting Dr. Houston's wife, who is still unable to leave her room. She is a delightful little lady who was born in Switzerland, but now is married to an American. Miss Gray and she speak German together so prettily. Last evening such a laughable entertainment as we had in the dining-room!—a mock trial in which Mr. Spenser, a most dignified though genial English gentleman, was held for absconding with the school funds of a little New England town. Miss Gray

and Dr. Houston got up the charge. The town meeting was held two evenings ago, and the wrong-doings of Mr. Spenser were discussed then. In the trial the jury and the witnesses got mixed up, and the result was tremendously funny. Everybody was convulsed with laughter. One of the witnesses was a French gentleman who gesticulated and spoke broken English in the most laughable way. One lawyer, a gentleman from the West, was so witty that nobody could get ahead of him. One of the witnesses was an exceedingly tall and slender gentleman, and this lawyer was quite short and stout, with a boyish face; and he made a rush and jumped up on a chair beside the tall man, and said to the court: "Wait a minute, your Honor; I want to whisper to my witness." It was too, too funny! The audience laughed until they cried.

At breakfast this morning Mr. Meagher, who is an Irish gentleman, and most delightful in his manners, and has such a musical voice, gave a conundrum which none of us had ever heard before,—"Who are the *lightest* men in the world?" Somebody guessed something about the men of Cork (Ireland), but no one could get any further. So Mr. Meagher told us, so softly and prettily it seemed as if he were apologizing for it. This was the answer: "The men of Cork are light; the men of Ayr are lighter; but there are '*lighter*-men' on the Thames." We all thought it as good as any conundrum we had ever heard. I am going to send it to Phil and Mr. Thayer, but not the answer. Here comes Mr. Meagher now; he

has just been walking the deck with Mr. Hope, another gentleman who sits at our table. I must close my book and hear what they have to say. . . .

Just time for a few lines before the lunch bell rings. "Eight bells" struck while Mr. Meagher was telling us those interesting things about his family. He recited the sweetest little poem which he composed just before

his daughter, whom he calls "Mavourneen," was married. He told us about the wild flowers of Ireland, — honeysuckle, broom, hawthorn, — and described the richness of their growth. It made us wish we were going to stop in Ireland for a while. Mr. Hope told me some funny things about India and Persian cats when I went for a promenade with him. He is a very bright man, and used

to have charge of a plantation in India. He has piercing dark eyes, and wears a little Scotch Tam O'Shanter of a faded brown color. He sits next to me at table, and is always prompt to be in his place. We generally get in late because we have so many wraps and books and things to take care of, and my chair always sticks so that I cannot turn it round to get into my place. Mr. Hope always turns it for me. He makes the funniest remarks about the things on the table.

The lunch bell! We must go. We have some distance to go to the dining-room, for "Cosey Corner" is

on the uppermost deck, a lovely place to get the freshest air, and view the sky and sea. We think the people miss it who stay on the other deck; but then, we think we have the nicest lot up here. . . . Clare told us at lunch about the collie that is in the steerage. She

patted him, and talked with the old Scotch woman who owns him. She says Carlo's grandmother belonged to the Queen, and she made Clare notice his *extra hind toes*, which prove that he is a thoroughbred. We have had a deliciously lazy time since lunch, just lying back in our chairs and letting our eyes close occasionally. We were startled out of our dreamy state by some one's calling, "Oh, there's a ship!" So we all sat up to look, and soon almost everybody was wide awake. It was a full-rigged ship, and came so near we could call out to those on board and hear their reply. She was from Bremen. A little while ago there was a new excitement. A school of porpoises was very close to us. It was very pretty to see them throw themselves out of the water, and make the spray flash in the sunlight. Elizabeth made a little sketch of them "on the fly." She said she had to use her imagination freely, the creatures kept moving so; but we think it will do for the "log book." Miss Trawlor, a young lady who is going over to spend the winter in Paris for art study, made a sketch of our group in "Cosey Corner," while we were all half asleep after lunch. She has a sketchbook which she hopes to fill with little things on the voyage. She does several every day. Elizabeth and she often try the same study. One of the gentlemen in the Western party has a "Kodak." He took Clare and Mr. Laighton this morning way out in the bow, sitting on a big anchor. We could not tell how good it was because he has not had his camera long, and will have to wait till he gets on shore to have a photographer

develop his plates. He took Mr. Laighton's address and promised to send him two. Mr. Laighton will send one to Clare. I hope they will be good. Phil and Mr. Thayer have taken a camera with them, and promised to send us some results. Mr. Thayer has beautiful luck in developing and printing. Mollie and Miss Gray have just accepted an invitation to go down to the other deck and play shovel-board with Dr. Houston and the surgeon. We are all going down to look on. Shall probably not get back till after dinner, as it is "one bell" (half past four) now. I kept my watch at Boston time, so I could tell just what they were doing at home. . . . EVENING. Rosalie, Dr. Houston's little daughter, and I have been promenading in the line of people on deck. I have just told Rosalie a story about my little dog at home, and her papa has come to take her down to bed. There is to be a musical and literary entertainment in the music room at eight o'clock. Clare and Mollie are going to play a duet. Elizabeth has her banjo in a box in her steamer trunk, and we coaxed her to get it out for this evening; but she says she is too lazy. She sings some sweet little Spanish songs with it, and I do hope she has decided to favor the company this evening. Clare writes up to-morrow's doings, so she must be the one to describe this entertainment. We never get through till it is pretty late, and then just have time for a breath of air on deck before bedtime. Mollie has just come up and says Elizabeth has taken out her banjo and is getting it ready to play. Good! Miss Gray and I are going to sing a German

duet together. There is a college party — young professors — on board, and they are going to give some college songs. It looks like a storm; we fear it will come by to-morrow. We are determined to keep on deck if it is possible. There's "eight bells." *Auf wiedersehen!*

CHAPTER VIII.

NEARING THE OTHER SHORE.

THE rain did come during the night, and the water grew a little rough. This state of things continued for about twenty-four hours and caused a good many passengers to stay in the shelter of the music or dining room.

Our girls and Miss Gray were not to be subdued by a little "dirty weather," as the sailors called it. Umbrellas were spread in "Cosey Corner," and, clad in heavy woollen ulsters, or waterproofs, the party made merry any who ventured to call upon them. Part of the time Miss Gray read to them from the "Satchel Guide" and from William Black's "White Wings." The latter contains a very accurate description of the scenery about Iona and Staffa. It was one of these books that Miss Gray had illustrated with small photographs, and the girls were very anxious to find themselves exploring the regions so beautifully set forth in the word-pictures of Mr. Black.

In the afternoon many of the ladies took their fancy work to the music room, where a Scotch lady and one or two gentlemen sang Scotch songs. At evening the sky grew lighter and the air freshened, so that every one was rejoiced to be on deck. So fast and pleasantly had their

first rainy day passed, the girls could hardly realize that it was gone. Indeed, all days seemed to speed, and so happy were the girls in their surroundings that they felt willing to go on forever. Their voyage was longer than usual. About the time they left New York there was a rumor of icebergs, and the captain kept the ship south of her usual course. It was not until the afternoon of their eleventh day out that they began to see the Irish coast. As the end of the voyage drew near all the American passengers began to be busy with their letters for home. The girls were very anxious to use their first foreign postage stamps, which Mr. Laighton had procured for them from the purser, together with stationery bearing the blue crest and motto of the Anchor Line, "*Secure amidst perils.*"

Perhaps Mollie's letter, to which we happen to have access, will best tell the story of the last days on board. After giving an account of her health and happiness from the time she said good-by to her mother, Mollie went on to say: "How I wish, my dearest mamma, that you could see the wonderful twilights that we have had for a night or two! It just seems absurd to go to bed when it is broad daylight. Last evening we had a perfect sunset. The tints were beautiful. Everybody was fascinated, and spoke softly, it was such a mysterious kind of beauty. There are two lovely Quaker ladies on board, and one of them makes water-color sketches of everybody and everything. Some of them are really lovely, especially the skies. She made a rapid sketch of the sunset last evening,

and to-day she has worked it up and made it quite effective. When she had it finished she came up to Clare and said, 'My dear, thee has been so much comfort to me as I have talked with thee, I want thee to accept this little sketch of that glorious sunset sky. It will do for that little book which thee and thy friends are preparing so diligently, and I should like thee and them to think of me. May we all meet beyond the sunset!' Wasn't that sweet of her? We have made a great many friends, and hope to see some of them again. They have given us their cards and asked us to call on them, if we happen to be in the places where they live. There are some young American professors who have been very kind to us, lending us some guidebooks which we did not happen to have, etc. One of them knows Miss Gray's brother, who graduated from the same college with him. He is going to Germany for the summer to improve his German. There is a young Englishman, a Mr. Laighton, who has been with us a good deal. He has just come from Idaho, where his uncle is interested in mines, and sent for him, thinking he would like to go into business with him. It was a good chance, but Mr. Laighton says he got homesick, everything was so rough and strange. He has the most *Englishy* manners and expressions. We like to hear him talk, and he likes to ask us about certain American customs, and ways of speech. One day he was sitting next to Clare and a little away from us, as he had just moved her chair so the wind would not strike her. They had been comparing notes on English and

American manners, and he said: 'I beg your pardon, Miss Brewster, but will you tell me something I very much want to know?' And then, on Clare's assenting to do her best, he very gravely said: 'Is it really an American custom, if a lady is out with a gentleman in the daytime, for her to take his arm without him offering it? Do you know, my uncle brought some friends of his over from America a year or two ago, and there were two young ladies in the party, and my brother Harold was taking them through Regent Street one morning to a shop where they wished to go, and both of the girls stepped up to him and took each an arm. Just then some acquaintances of my brother happened to pass, and they looked at him as if they thought he was in a bad way. Poor Harold was so distressed he called a cab and got the girls into it as fast as he could, and gave the cabby directions where to go. He made some excuse and bowed himself off, and he did not get caught that way again. Now, is that an ordinary thing for young ladies to do in your country?' Clare said she tried to keep from giving a little scream, and calmly told him it was not the usual state of etiquette in Boston, but it might be in the far, wild West. Then she asked him if she might consult us all about it, and called us over, and we had quite a discussion. Mr. Laighton said he was convinced that it must have been a peculiarity of those particular Americans, but he could not get over his brother's adventure. 'Only fancy how awkward it was for Harold, you know,' he said.

"I am writing this on deck, and it is nine o'clock in

the evening. This afternoon we had beautiful views of Ireland, especially as we neared Moville, where the tender came out to meet us and take our passengers for 'the Emerald Isle.' Quite a party from our table left us there. Miss Trawlor, the art student, is going to visit her grandparents in Ireland. Her grandfather came on the tender to meet her. They had never seen each other

before. She is a sweet girl, and has been a favorite on board. The grandfather was a fine-looking old gentleman. Elizabeth and Miss Trawlor are going to correspond. They have become great friends. I think she stirred up some enthusiasm for art in Liz, who could do great things if she would only try. It was very

interesting to watch the steerage passengers getting on the tender. They put on such fine hats, and seemed so glad to get back to the old home. We waved them a farewell as the tender left. I hope they will all be happy.

"The captain told us he expected we should get a good view of the Giant's Causeway just after dinner. We did, and it was grand! The Irish coast is very bold in this vicinity, and stretches along in steep crags, really looking like fortresses of some old giants who, according to the story, used to live and fight each other here. In some places the wind and weather have worn away a great part of the rock and left lonely pillars standing out against the sky. They call them 'stacks.' We girls were all surprised that the coast should be so very grand. I don't know why, but I always imagined Ireland was rather flat and low along the coast. I shall never think so again. We saw such dear little cabins along the shore near Moville, and some ruined castles covered with ivy, and the most picturesque lighthouses. The sketchers were all kept busy.

"Mr. Hope has been watching out for Ailsa Craig, but it is a litttle hazy now, and he is not quite sure about it.

"Now, dear mamma, and all at home, I must say good night. It is getting late and I want to have my last twilight promenade, for to-morrow forenoon we hope to be in Glasgow. Now that the excitement of being so near land has come, we cannot help feeling anxious for the end, although we do love this old steamer, and 'Cosey Corner' seems like a little home to us. Dr. Houston

is waiting for me to walk with him and Rosalie. Mrs. Houston is quite well now, and able to be on deck all the time. They are from Boston, and know some friends of Clare's very well. To-morrow I will add a postscript just before I mail this letter. I think it will take two stamps, it is so long. We are getting used to saying 'tuppence, ha'penny,' which is the value of a single stamp for a United States letter. That is about five cents in our money.

"Good night to you all! It is about five o'clock at home now. You see we are ahead of your time. Oh, this twilight! You cannot know what it is like unless you really see it. Miss Gray says we shall notice it more and more as we go north. Our latitude now is between 55° and 56° N."

Very brief were the slumbers of any one that night, for unearthly noises began to prevail about midnight, when the steamer reached Greenock, and freight began to be taken out. They were to lie there until the morning tide enabled them to ascend the Clyde to Glasgow. It seemed very odd to take breakfast with a perfectly steady table before one, and without hearing the engines. The sail up the Clyde by daylight is a great treat. Many excursion boats are seen carrying happy parties, and all manner of freight vessels ply in all directions. The girls were delighted when they suddenly beheld Dumbarton Rock and Castle, standing up out of the river as if by magic. They wished the steamer would stop and allow them to land and explore the interesting old place. Mr. Hope was on hand

to tell them something of its history; he was pleased to see their interest in Scotland. He told them the rock was a mile in circumference and about two hundred and sixty feet high. Only a small garrison is stationed there. Ossian is supposed to have written about Dumbarton.

The Scotch thistle still grows wild on the rock, though rare in other parts of Scotland.

As the steamer neared the city the great shipyards appeared, and the clanging of the carpenters' hammers made loud music.

"And amid the clamors
Of clattering hammers,
He who listened heard now and then
The song of the master and his men."

CHAPTER IX.

GLASGOW.

Soon came the excitement of looking after luggage, getting ashore with it, and awaiting the visit of the inspectors. "Getting through the custom house" is at best a trying ordeal, and consumes valuable time. The young Americans were fortunate, however, in falling into the hands of a genial Scotch officer, who, while faithful in discharging his duty, was very considerate.

Meanwhile Miss Gray had been on the lookout for a certain cousin of hers who was to meet her at the dock. When the passengers' letters were brought on board at Greenock, Miss Gray had one from this Cousin Flora whom she had never seen, begging to be allowed to act as hostess to the party while they remained in Glasgow. Another letter from the uncle in the North welcomed his niece and her charge to "Auld Scotland," and expressed an earnest desire that she should go to her cousin's house rather than to a hotel. It seemed almost too much to impose a party of five on a young couple whom she had never met; but, as Miss Gray said to her girls, "It would not do to decline Scotch hospitality; we should never be forgiven. I must meet my cousin, if I can find her in this crowd, and tell her we accept her kind offer, although we think it too magnanimous in her."

Quite by accident the cousins met, as neither had a very clear mental picture of the other. Mrs. Wales, who proved to be the brighest and sweetest of young Scotch matrons, was a little confused by the great crowd of people and trunks around her. Her "good man," as she called her husband, was obliged to be away on business, and she had never seen an ocean steamer arrive before. But she knew there were four young girls and a lady in the party, and so she looked out for such a group. Owing to the necessity of locating each piece of luggage before it could be inspected, the party could not keep together for some time. Clare and Mr. Laighton were looking up Clare's trunk, which refused to come to the surface when everything else had been collected. Mollie had little Rosalie Houston by the hand while the Doctor and his wife were opening their trunks. Elizabeth and Leta kept guard over such possessions as had been brought together.

"I just wish," said Leta, "they had Mrs. Brinton, the matron at the Wellington, here! Wouldn't she bring order out of this chaos of trunks in short metre?"

Miss Gray, attended by Professor Merriam, the young American who knew her brother, had just made a trip to the clerk's office to exchange some money for cab fares, when, as she returned, Elizabeth mentioned her name to Leta. Mrs. Wales, whose bright eyes had been following Miss Gray's rather pretty travelling-cloak from place to place, inquired if that was the Miss Gray who was in charge of the young ladies from America; and soon the

cousins were embracing each other, and Mrs. Wales was offering hospitality not only to the party but to all their friends! Professor Merriam and his friend accepted her kind invitation to come to tea that evening, but Mr. Laighton was obliged to make his farewells at the cab door, as he took an afternoon train for England. Two cabs were necessary to take Mrs. Wales and her guests to her comfortable home, where a dainty lunch was awaiting the travellers.

"Now, my dear young ladies, make yourselves entirely at home," said this genial hostess. "My good man and I call this 'Liberty Hall,' and every one who comes is free to enjoy himself as he likes best."

And very much at home and very happy were the girls with such a kindly welcome. After lunch they busied themselves in getting out fresh articles for their first toilet in Scotland, and were all in readiness to meet Mr. Wales when he arrived from Edinburgh, where he had been called that morning. They found him a match for his kind-hearted and cheerful wife, whose efforts for their comfort and entertainment he gladly seconded.

Their steamer friends, Professors Merriam and Day, came to tea, and afterward the whole company went forth to see the city. The girls were intensely interested in all they saw in this, their first walk in Europe. The dingy stone buildings had no drawback in their eyes; they were rather picturesque they thought. They were quite eager to ride on top of the 'trams," as they now began to call the horse-cars. Mr. Wales took them all

to a cyclorama of the Battle of Bannockburn, which, like all similar works of art, gives a much more vivid impression than any description. The girls listened attentively to the explanation of the scene. Elizabeth professed much satisfaction at learning that the *burn* of the

word "Bannockburn" refers to the stream which flows in that vicinity.

"I always knew that a bannock was a kind of cake, and, having had the story of King Alfred letting the cakes burn so drilled into me, I associated Bannockburn with a similar story. I have got over one of my delusions already. Who knows what I may yet do?"

"We shall have a glimpse of the real Field of Bannockburn as we go to Stirling on our way to the Trossachs," said Miss Gray.

After leaving the cyclorama they proceeded to the West End Park, where, as they walked through the shady paths, they could see the fine buildings of Glasgow University standing out against the evening sky. The two American gentlemen said they had, during the afternoon, visited the university and grounds. While there they had come across their Western friend of the Kodak, busily taking permanent impressions of what he saw, a crowd of small Glasgow urchins at his heels, making free and not altogether complimentary remarks, to which, like a true-born American, he paid no heed.

On the way home it was decided to take seats on the top of a tram, much to the delight of the girls, who enjoyed their elevated position. Leta expressed compassion for the horses, which looked so small from above.

"I feel as I did about those poor little mules who drew the street-cars when mamma and I were visiting you last year, Mollie," she said.

But European horses seem quite accustomed to their top-heavy loads, and indeed are better off than our own poor equines, who always have to drag "one more." In Europe a public conveyance does not accept passengers after its seats are all filled.

When the sight-seers reached home some of them were surprised to find that it was nearly midnight. "But

we must have supper," said Mrs. Wales, and forthwith a repast was prepared, although no one felt quite able to do it justice; and the girls were rather astonished at so late a meal. They now had to say good-by to their steamer friends, who started next day for London, *en route* for the Continent. Leta gave them Phil's permanent address in hopes that they might fall in with his party. After they had gone our travellers began to realize that they were weary with all they had seen and done during the day, and soon retired for their first night's sleep in the Old World. Mrs. Wales told them to remember their dreams, but they were too tired for dreaming, and slept very soundly.

Next morning, as Mollie and Leta, who roomed together, were dressing, they heard in the street below a melancholy kind of singing. Leta drew aside the curtain and, looking down, saw a poor woman with several little children, one in her arms, coming down the hilly street. They were singing their mournful song to attract charity. Leta and Mollie each threw out a small coin, and the woman nodded her head several times in acknowledgment, and kept on with her pathetic music.

After breakfast it was decided to start out to transact some necessary business. The girls wished to procure Scotch macintoshes before encountering the Scotch mists, of which they had heard so much. In Cook's office they met one of their steamer acquaintances, a jolly Scotchman, whose humor had contributed to the evening entertainments. He was eager to be of service

to the American ladies, and they gladly accepted his aid; for time was short and there was much to be done.

In the afternoon Mrs. Wales took them all to call on the family of a Free Church minister, whose wife was a relative of Miss Gray. At the end of the call they were invited to take a social cup of tea. The table was dainty in its appointments and offered bread and butter, light cake, and fragrant black tea. The usual accompaniment of a Scotch tea-table, marmalade, in pretty cut-glass dishes, was not wanting.

Later a visit was made to Glasgow Cathedral, which dates from the twelfth century, and is famous for its beautiful clustered columns and fine arches. There are in the cathedral one hundred and fifty-nine windows of various dimensions, and these contain some of the finest modern stained glass in the world. The custodian was an old soldier and very much in love with the beauties of his surroundings, and as the girls listened attentively they gathered a good many general facts about cathedral architecture which served them all through their journey. Of course Mollie se-

cured several photographs, and also a guidebook of the cathedral. This was her first opportunity, although she had cast lingering looks in several shop windows the evening before. "I think I shall start a collection of guidebooks as well as photographs," she said. "Lots of my friends would like to read them and look at the pictures. There's a great deal of information in this little book." Leaving the cathedral, there was only time to view from afar the fine Necropolis, or burial hill, which is reached by a bridge called the "Bridge of Sighs." The monuments are grand, and the girls would have liked time to examine them closely. Mollie had secured a fine photographic general view and one or two of the principal monuments.

They were now obliged to hasten home, as Mrs. Wales had invited some young friends of hers to spend the evening with the American ladies.

CHAPTER X.

THE CRINAN CANAL.

EARLY the following morning, to the regret of their kind host and hostess, the party took leave of Glasgow, and started for Oban by way of the Crinan Canal. Mr. Wales desired to keep his American guests over the Sabbath in order that they might visit his Sabbath school. This was a mission for foundry boys, and he led them in music, and illustrated the Bible lessons by original sketches on the blackboard. He was very zealous in this good work, and the girls would have much enjoyed seeing him in his school. But time passed, and Miss Gray told them they had a long list of places to see; and, although she regretted leaving her cousins, it must be done.

They were accompanied to the underground station, the girls' first experience of the kind, by Mr. Wales and Prince, a brown doggie who had devoted himself to the guests of his master from their arrival.

"Even dogs are hospitable in this country," said Elizabeth, as she rubbed Prince's soft little ears.

Their underground ride was soon over, and they took passage on a wee steamer for Dunoon, where they were to meet the fine large excursion steamer *Columba*, one of the famous fleet belonging to David MacBrayne. On their way to Dunoon they passed many pretty bits of

scenery. The day was beautiful, giving fine lights and shadows on the hillsides which guard the pretty villages that nestle here and there along the shore. After embarking on the *Columba* the scenery grows in loveliness, and the steamer calls at places whose names alone are suggestive of romance. The girls made hopeless attempts to pronounce the name of one pretty little seaside retreat. It was spelled *Tighnabruaich*. When they found out that it meant in English, "House of the Brae," they concluded not to attempt the Gaelic word again.

The bookstall on the *Columba* contains a fine assortment of views of the lovely region through which the tourist passes while on this steamer. Mollie hovered about it at intervals, and with difficulty — for they were all so charming — selected various photographs and illustrated guidebooks. Indeed, the other girls found it impossible to resist such attractive souvenirs of this picturesque trip, and each carried quite a little parcel away.

"We are seeing things so fast," said Leta, "we shall never be able to recall half of the loveliness, unless we have some views. Mollie was right after all."

"Oh, do see that perfectly lovely old castle on the hill there!" exclaimed Clare with delight, as they passed Tarbert. "Do let us see what the guidebook says about it."

"That gentleman is telling his daughters that it was built by Robert Bruce, and that he used to live there.

Just think of it! See! here is a picture of it in my guidebook," said Mollie, with appreciation in every feature.

Elizabeth had quietly taken her sketchbook from her shawlstrap and was seizing the outlines of the castle as they sped along. Her "enthusiasm," of which she spoke so lightly before leaving home, was being developed faster than any one expected. She felt very glad that, to please her father, she had, when only a little girl, applied herself

to drawing, so that now her hand and eye were very fairly trained. While Elizabeth worked up her sketch of Tarbert Castle, Miss Gray read to the girls from her guidebook a little account of its history. Robert Bruce resided there in the year 1326. It is the only one of the ancient Scotch castles of which an account of the building is preserved. Even the prices paid to the various tradesmen employed to work on the edifice have been kept on record.

As they were fast approaching the Crinan Canal, Miss Gray also read an extract concerning the visit of Queen Victoria in 1847. At that time the canal boat was drawn by horses, ridden by postilions in bright scarlet uniforms. Now the traffic has increased so much that a fine little steamer is used.

Looking on the map of Scotland, one is impressed by the great number of indentations in the coast and the corresponding peninsulas. To sail around one of these peninsulas requires a good deal of time, especially when, as in the case of the Mull of Kintyre, it is a long one. To shorten the journey from Glasgow to the West Highlands the Crinan Canal was constructed, after long delays and great expenditure of money. It is nine miles long and has fifteen locks. The water is brought from lakes among the neighboring hills.

At about one o'clock in the afternoon the party found themselves comfortably seated on the deck of the pretty little steamer *Linnet*, gliding along with a gentle motion on the softly flowing waters of the canal. The scenery is of a Highland type, not the stern type of the far North, with its rigor and desolation, but Highland in regard to its human side. The girls saw the first thatched white cabins, with blue peat smoke rising from the low chimneys. At one of the locks a man in Highland costume played the bagpipes and looked very picturesque. Some pennies were thrown him, although most of the way a sign is displayed on the boat requesting passengers not to throw money to those on shore.

There is danger of the recipients falling into the canal in their efforts to secure the money.

"There are the very children Mr. Hope told us we should see!" exclaimed Leta, as a flock of barefooted lads and lassies, with pails of milk, and bunches of heather to sell, flew along in the old track beside the canal. "See! they *have* got little glasses for people to drink out of, just as he said. We must choose the cleanest-looking for our milk. Where's the box with the 'biscuits,' Mollie? Can't we all get off here and walk on, Miss Gray? Oh, do see that woman driving her cow along! She is stopping now to milk her for that party of young men in knee-breeches who just got off. Do let's hurry and see the fun."

Clare bought a big bunch of heather from a little hatless and shoeless laddie, who gave her a beseeching look and a "Please, leddie?"

Then they found two little girls with clean tumblers and a pitcher of nice-looking milk; so they sat on a bit of stone wall and ate "biscuits," as they had learned to call what at home would be "crackers," and drank their milk with a relish. Clare picked a little handful of "gowans" and laid them in her notebook to press for her floral

album. Elizabeth sketched the woman milking her cow, and then they started on to be ready to take the *Linnet* when she had passed through the series of locks. In portions of the canal the banks were lovely with wild flowers. Wild roses, blue irises, sweet-scented honeysuckle, and great plumy ferns, all grew in rich profusion. Tall spikes of purple foxglove stood erect and showy here and there. Such was the fringe that adorned the narrow waterway on which their toylike steamer floated in a sort of fairy dream, and beyond this foreground stretched in all directions a landscape diversified by hill and forest and ivy-covered castle.

"If we could only remember it all, just as it is!" moaned Mollie.

"Yes, if we could make it part of our 'mental furniture,' as Miss Dillon used to say in her lectures," rejoined Leta.

"Well, I shall have some bits of it preserved," said Elizabeth, "and will have to trust to luck for the rest."

"Clare is enjoying it, I know," said Miss Gray. "She looks peaceful as a nun. You make me think of your namesake, 'the novice Clare,' only you look happier than she did when —

> 'She sate upon the galley's prow,
> And seemed to mark the waves below.'"

Miss Gray sat down near Clare and took her hand in hers.

"I am too happy to talk," said Clare. "I'm just drinking in the beauty."

The others gathered around Miss Gray and Clare,

making seats of their shawls and rugs ; and for a time nothing was said. Seeing so much that was novel, and trying to write brief and rapid outlines of it in their note-books, had made heavy demands on the energy and endurance of even our enthusiastic American girls. Meanwhile the end of the canal had been reached and the passengers for Oban transferred to the *Chevalier*, where dinner was found to be ready.

The route from Crinan, which is the end of the canal, is a perfect panorama of beauty by land and sea. It skirts the coast of Lorne, makes a short run into the waters of the broad Atlantic, and stops at several picturesque settlements. At Craignish a ferryboat came out, bringing two shepherds and a brace of young dogs going on by the steamer to Oban. The three peaks of the island of Jura, called the " Paps of Jura," stood out clearly in the afternoon light. Between Jura and Scarba Islands is the narrow sound called Corrivreckan, which the seamen of this region dread on account of its seething swell of waters. In time of storm there is little hope for a vessel caught in this narrow, deep gulf with its conflicting currents. As the girls listened to hear the noise of the tumultuous waters, whose white gleam could be seen from afar, Miss Gray read softly from her guidebook the oft-quoted lines : —

" As you pass through Jura's sound,
Bend your course by Scarba's shore ;
Shun, oh, shun the gulf profound,
Where Corrivreckan's surges roar ! "

While they were stopping at Easdale the girls heard the men about the pier calling out to each other in Gaelic. The guidebook told them that this island is famous for slate quarries, and Mollie overheard a tourist near her telling his companion that it is a custom among the people to purchase slabs suitable for gravestones and keep them in readiness to mark their final resting-places. The inhabitants of Easdale lead a very isolated life on their island, retaining many of the old superstitions as well as the language and customs of their ancestors.

The steamer is now in the Firth of Lorne, with the Sound of Mull on the left in the distance. Beyond are the mountains of Morvern, and the southern extremity of Lismore Island, with its lighthouse. Ahead lies the island of Kerrera, which forms with the mainland the Sound of Kerrera, through which the steamer enters the landlocked harbor of Oban Bay. All along the way the girls had been charmed by the castles and mansion-houses perched securely in picturesque and apparently inaccessible spots. By listening to the conversation of some of their fellow-tourists, who were English or lowland Scotch, they gathered some information concerning the proprietors of these estates, who were well-known personages in their own country. By this time their eyes, as Mollie expressed it, *fairly refused to view any more landscapes o'er*. Even the picturesque and ivy-clothed donjon of old Dunollie, dark against its background of sky, brought but a languid note of admiration from the quartet. Miss Gray had withdrawn to a comfortable corner of the deck, and the girls had

covered her with shawls and placed a soft handbag under her head. She could open her eyes now and again and let them rest upon the passing scenes. As they neared Oban she roused herself, threw aside her wraps, and went over to the rail, all alert for a sight of the beautiful little capital of the West Highlands, of which she possessed delightful memories from her previous visit.

Clare had Miss Gray's guidebook, in which were in-

serted many pencil notes and clippings gathered from various sources.

"Here's a bright little poem about Oban, that you have copied into your book, Miss Gray," said she.

"Oh, yes. It was written by Professor Blackie of Edinburgh, and I took it from 'Altavona,' a matchless book about the Highlands, of which he is a devoted

admirer. His summer home is just a little way from here; we passed it as we came along."

"Yes; I heard that Scotch gentleman over there telling his wife about it, but I did not know whom he meant when he said, 'Blackie — he's a bit daft about the Highlands and the preservation of the Gaelic — lives there,'" said Mollie.

"After you have visited the Highlands," said Miss Gray, "you will enjoy reading Professor Blackie's book, which I have at home. We are a little early for the season at Oban, but you will appreciate how truly the poem describes the general appearance of the place."

The girls bent over the copy of the rhymes on Oban, and Leta read a line here and there aloud.

"'Tis there the steamboats drive about —
My tongue is no deceiver —
Out and in, and in and out,
Like shuttle of the weaver;

. . . . .

At Oban all the world you see —

. . . . .

All flock to plash about with joy
Like ducks in Oban waters.'"

At the end of each stanza is the refrain, —

"For Oban is a dainty place;
In distant or in nigh lands,
No town delights the tourist race
Like Oban in the Highlands!"

"I am sure it will delight us," said Clare, gazing with eyes full of interest at the yachts lying near, the many

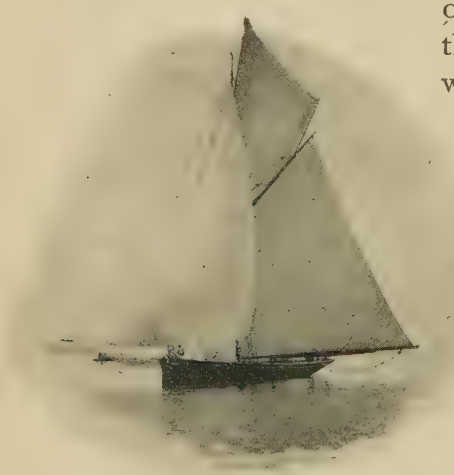
rowboats, and several excursion steamers about the pier. Elizabeth was busy with a sketch of Dunolly, but lent an ear to all that the others said.

"We must get all our bags and bundles together now and be all ready to step ashore," said Miss Gray. "We will go to the same little hotel at which I staid when I was here before. It is only a few steps from the pier, so we need not ride. Take firm hold of all your property so that the hotel porters cannot seize it and try to make you follow them. If you see the one with 'Imperial' on his badge, let him take the luggage."

CHAPTER XI.

OBAN IN THE HIGHLANDS.

It was not long before the party were seated in the rose-adorned little parlor of the Imperial while Miss Gray made her bargain for rooms with the landlady. Very glad they were to find themselves in possession of two large front bedrooms, from whose wide windows they could overlook the main street, the pier, and the placid waters of the bay.



"I hope I am not going to have a Western chill," said Mollie, "but I do believe my teeth will chatter in another minute."

"Let's go and ask the other girls if they are cold," said Leta, opening the door and meeting Elizabeth just coming to them.

"Yes, freezing. I've had to keep my ulster on," was her reply. "But Miss Gray has ordered hot chocolate for tea, and she says we shall soon get warmed up."

Clare was very much fatigued from her long day's journey, and Miss Gray made her lie down while the rest went to tea, and said she would bring her up a nice little invalid's repast when they returned. Rest would be better for her just then than food.

Delicious salmon-trout, sweet graham bread, which the waiter called "brown bread," and well-prepared cocoa, as their beverage proved to be, soon infused warmth and cheerfulness into mind and body, and they began to talk about going out to see the town. Miss Gray had ordered a special tea to be prepared for Clare while theirs was being dispatched, so there was no delay about getting out. Clare was interested in the little silver rack filled with dry toast and the tiny horn spoon for her egg. She fell quite in love with the prettily decorated china on her tray. "It is all so *English* — or I suppose I should say Scotch," she said.

"You missed being served by the most painfully polite waiter in a dress suit, Clare," said Leta. "He said 'Thank you?' no matter what we did or said. When I sat down in my chair, which he had drawn out, he thanked me. It made me think of primary school days and the teacher saying, 'Now keep your voice up at that comma'; for his went up in the funniest way."

"Yes, it was distressing to hear him," said Mollie. "When I asked for the sugar he brought it in the most devoted manner, and when I helped myself he said 'Thank you?' and carried it off again. I almost said 'Oh, *don't!*'"

"He is an English waiter," said Miss Gray, "and thinks his servility makes him more pleasing to his superiors. If he knew how distasteful it made him to most Americans, I think he would mend his manners."

"If he is trying to get a fee for every 'Thank you?' I should much rather pay him for not saying it," said Elizabeth, looking up from a post card she was writing to her sister.

As they passed out through the hall the same obsequious waiter was at the foot of the stairs to see if they required any directions about seeing the town. Civil to the last degree he was, (poor man!) but it seemed as if life under such a burden of civility must be very little pleasure. Doubtless, however, when with "his equals" he would be able to freely criticise the manners of "these 'ere Hamericans," and wonder if they would pay well for his fawning attentions.

They first went to the telegraph office, whence Miss Gray sent a message to her uncle, and then strolled into the attractive shops, where they found many things they wanted. At a jeweller's were very dainty articles in pebble jewelry. The pale-green Iona pebbles set in silver drew many exclamations of delight from the girls. The young girl in charge told them that the Princess Beatrice had often bought things there. Well-bred American girls need no princess to set an example of what is attractive in the way of pretty things, for they have natural taste in all such matters and are accustomed

to quietly following its dictates. So our girls purchased a supply for themselves and absent cousins which made the young shopkeeper's heart throb with satisfaction, though she preserved an outward indifference.

"When you go to Iona you can get some of the little unpolished green stones from the children and have them polished and set as you like," said Miss Gray.

Photographs were exhibited in many windows, but the girls were well provided with views of the vicinity, and did not wish to get any of places not yet seen. "You can get them at Inverness, after you have seen the Caledonian Canal scenery," Miss Gray suggested as Mollie lingered, loath to leave without a single view bought in Oban. Some neat copies of Scott's "Lord of the Isles," with wooden covers, were secured as particularly characteristic of the region.

"I wish there were some of the 'Lady of the Lake,'" said Leta.

"Edinburgh will be time enough for those," said Miss Gray, and the party moved on to new fields of souvenirs.

"See those splendid Scotch rugs!" exclaimed Elizabeth. "Those go to my heart, especially in this chilly air. I think I shall get one, for I left my steamer rug at Glasgow with my chair, and I know I shall need it."

Accordingly, all five trooped into a shop, the windows of which displayed most enticing woolly fabrics in lovely tints.

"Let's all get Tams for the Iona trip," was Mollie's

suggestion, as her eye lighted on a pile of fluffy gray and fawn-colored Tam O'Shanters.

"There's one just like Ethel Hubbard got when she was here," said Elizabeth. "I always wanted one, and now I am going to have it."

Caps of all styles and colors were brought forth for the inspection of the American girls, whose advent the shopkeeper had awaited ever since he saw them walking up to their hotel.

"Here's a little travelling-cap just like Mr. Laighton's! Clare better have it," said Mollie mischievously, holding it towards Clare. "You could wear it hind side before, as he used to wear his, and it would be a reminder of those *tête-à-têtes* you used to have discussing American *versus* English manners."

The little cap was very becoming to Clare, but she had rather set her heart on a soft, creamy Tam, so finally decided to do as the rest did; and at length each girl had secured a "perfect love," and Elizabeth was looking at the handsome rug which had attracted her notice, and which the obliging attendant had brought inside for her inspection. Oban prices are generally said to be high, but Miss Gray said she had found things comparatively cheap there, and as it is a place of pleasant associations, she was willing that her girls should make what purchases they wished.

It was nine o'clock when they were ready to go back to the hotel. They looked over their newly acquired possessions, made up their accounts, and settled down to

finish up their notes for the past two days. As they sat at their windows and looked into the street it was still light, and they could not believe it was ten o'clock at night. The larger of the rooms had two beds, and Mollie, Leta, and Elizabeth were to occupy it, while Miss Gray decided that it was best for her to sleep with Clare in case she should not rest quite well; so Elizabeth read aloud a portion of the selections for the day from her little prayer book, and then all settled down for the night.

It was midnight before they could sleep, for the light came in through the curtains, and people continued to walk noisily through the street, while strolling musicians made music directly in front of the hotel. The girls talked over the day's trip and its beauties, and wished the folks at home could enjoy it all. At length, expressing hopes that the next day would be pleasant for their excursion to Iona and Staffa, one after another their voices ceased, and they slept.

And outside the northern night kept watch with its pale light, which, toward the morning, grew dusky with mist.

When the day came there was a promise of rain. A little wail of disappointment went up from the front windows of the Imperial Hotel.

"I did so want to have sunlight on those islands that are so beautifully described in 'White Wings,'" said Mollie, as she sat behind the great fuchsia that stood in the window and looked out over the gray waters, shadowed by the overhanging skies.

"Well, it's a comfort to see those 'scarlet funnelled steamers,' that Mr. Black talks so much about, looking so cheerful out there," remarked Leta, who had just tried on her new Tam, with her hair still in two long braids as she had worn it during the night.

"Is it time to get up?—what time does the boat start for Iona?" came the double question from Elizabeth, who had just awakened.

"Yes, dear, it is half past six, and the boat goes at eight; and, just think,—it looks like a rainy day. Isn't that too bad? You will not be able to make any sketches."

"Dismal enough," said Elizabeth, who had risen, and stood at the window, "but 'some days must be dark and dreary.'"

"And we did have a lovely day yesterday," consoled Mollie, as she sewed a button on to her boot. "I wonder how Clare is this morning."

A tap at the door was responded to by all three calling "Come!" Suddenly the recollection that they were not at school, and it might be a servant instead of Clare or Miss Gray, caused Mollie to exclaim, "Goodness! none of us are dressed."

Elizabeth suggested that it might be "Mr. Thank You," as they had dubbed the waiter; while Leta, who had on her blanket gown, went toward the door and asked, "Who is it?"

It was Clare; so Leta turned the key and opened the door to admit her. She looked a little pale still, though

her eyes were bright with the excitement of new surroundings.

"O girls! I have been up for a long time. I've written a letter to papa, and got dressed all ready for the boat, and I have been watching the people on the yachts getting their decks washed. The sailors were singing such queer-sounding words and music. Several boats came in and brought fish, and some women went down with odd-shaped baskets on their backs and brought up fish to the hotels. I came to see if some of you would like to go out for a walk before breakfast."

"I'll go," said Mollie, who had just finished dressing.

"Get back in time for breakfast at half past seven," cautioned Elizabeth, "and don't let Mollie get among the photographs, Clare."

CHAPTER XII.

A DAY AMONG THE ISLANDS.

At eight o'clock our party were on board the *Fusilier*, choosing seats for the trip they had all looked forward to with so much interest. The route is a most picturesque one, and they had hoped to be able to view each scene by sunlight, so that the impression might be as clear as possible. They were all aware that neutral tints have certain beauties of their own, and that gray skies and misty hilltops may inspire very poetical thoughts.

"But," said Mollie ruefully, as she looked at the sombre sky, "it all seems so like a dream, we need the strongest kind of light to touch up all the outlines. I'm going to read my guidebook and find out how it ought to look; for just see how short a distance ahead of us we can see!"

So Mollie and Leta settled into a corner near the smokestack, and tried to locate the points of interest as well as the mist would allow. Elizabeth found one of the wicker armchairs supplied by the steamer and ensconced Miss Gray in it, tucking her up carefully with shawls; for as they went out from the shelter of the bay the wind blew cold and raw. She was very glad of her great soft rug purchased the evening before, and wrapped

it snugly about herself and Clare as they sat near Miss Gray on the deck.

They were fortunate in having seen the first portion of the journey in bright colors the previous day, otherwise they would have had little recollection of its beauties. The route passes through the Sound of Kerrera and around the southern coast of the Island of Mull. About noon the steamer enters the narrow body of water between the southwest end of Mull and Iona. This is Iona Sound, and here the steamer comes to anchor, and the great red lifeboat, with its sturdy crew, awaits those tourists who wish to land on the island. Everything is done with great care, so that it is almost impossible for an accident to happen. But just as our party were leaving the steamer an incident occurred which might have proved serious.

During the morning the girls had been interested in watching two figures who promenaded the deck. They were a young man in a tweed touring costume and an immense deerhound, that seemed devoted to his master. As they passed the girls Elizabeth had offered the hound a bit of biscuit, hoping to entice him to stand still long enough for her to get a sketch of him. He did not seem disposed to make friends, but, keeping his black nose close against his master's long woollen hose, he paced after him over the deck. They often stood together near the rail watching the seabirds, and Elizabeth managed to secure a very good sketch of them together.

Some time before anchoring at Iona the dog and his

master had gone below. As the young man reappeared without his dog, the girls concluded he had had him locked up by some of the stewards, to avoid taking him ashore. His dogship, however, had no idea of submitting to the separation and succeeded in escaping to the deck. Scenting his master's footsteps, he rushed to the top of the ladder leading down to the boat and made a spring to join him.

Clare was just stepping into the boat when he dashed past her. Making a sudden movement of fear, she would have missed her footing and fallen but for the helping hand of the sailor who was steadying her. The young man was so much surprised at his dog's sudden appearance that he could only seize him by the collar and ejaculate his name, —

"*Bran!*"

In an instant he had collected himself and rose to lead Bran back to the ladder, lifting his cap with an air of general apology to those in the boat.

A man in a small boat waiting round in case of accident called out, "I'll take him ashore for ye, sir. Wait there a bit and I'll come for the two of ye."

So the big boat moved off, and Bran and his master stood upon the paddle-box and waited their turn in the small one. They afterward appeared at the end of the procession of sight-seers on the island, Bran in his old submissive attitude, close at his master's heels.

It seemed very good to be on *terra firma* again. The walk among the ruins was welcome after being inactive

so long on the wind-swept deck of the *Fusilier*, for the girls had held out bravely against going down to the cabin. Everybody seemed chilled into a state of apathy. The guide strove to stir up enthusiasm about the ruins, but the greater part of his audience remained indifferent.

Although gray skies continued to brood over everything which they had hoped to see in sunshine, our girls felt very happy as they walked about this far-famed, mystic isle, seeing with their own eyes the proofs of a civilization which had made the island famous so many centuries ago.

Clare's heart was touched by the children who crowd up to the tourist as soon as he lands and patter beside him with their little bare feet, offering for sale strings of delicate shells, or handfuls of green Iona stones. Their plaintive little voices ring in one's ears long after, whenever the visit to Iona is recalled.

"Thrippence, lady! only thrippence!"

They are not permitted to annoy the visitor, but they have a persistent way of always keeping their wares before him that ought to result profitable for the poor little souls.

"How I should like to stay here a week and explore the island!" said Mollie. "We would get some of the children to go with us and show us where they find the pebbles and shells. It would be lovely to find them ourselves. We could pay them for going with us, and that would be just as well."

"And see these dear little wild flowers," said Clare, adding some gowans to the dainty bunch she held in her hand. "Oh, something has stung me!" she cried, beginning to take off her glove quickly.

"It is a nettle," said Miss Gray, pointing to the rank-growing plant. "I must find some leaves of the plant that is an antidote for a nettle sting," she continued, looking along the road. "Ah, here it is, I believe. The Scotch call it 'dockan.' At Alloway Kirk I was stung by nettles while picking some ivy leaves, and a Scotch gentleman in our party found some of these leaves and rubbed my hand and wrist with them, and the pain soon left me."

"Yes, my hand feels better already," said Clare. "Thank you, dear Miss Gray. I will add a few leaves of 'dockan' to my collection"; and Clare went on with her pleasant occupation, being careful to avoid the prickly plant, which has served to point a familiar moral,— "Grasp it like a man of mettle."

The cheerfulness with which this group of Americans moved on their way contrasted strongly with the serious methods of their fellow-travellers. Now and then one of these ventured a remark to a companion, but for the most part they plodded on soberly and almost in sadness, gathered silently about the relics, looked, said nothing, and passed on. To get through with the task of "doing" Iona was their only object; at least so it seemed to the alert maidens and their clear-eyed teacher, accustomed to find "sermons in stones and good in everything."

"I should like to see Mr. Carpenter dropped down

into the midst of these solemn creatures," said Elizabeth, referring to the witty and vivacious Western lawyer who had made so much fun on the steamer.

"They would think he was American dynamite if he succeeded in producing any such explosions as he did on shipboard," said Miss Gray.

A little laugh greeted this remark, and Leta added, "I should like to hear a 'chipper' American expression either of appreciation or the Mark Twain style. It makes you think of 'the Innocents Abroad' when you see people taking it all so seriously and the guide having it all his own way. I wish somebody would ask a ridiculous question."

"*You* might," suggested Mollie.

"Oh, no. They probably think we are quite too hilarious now, and you know I am from New England, and I don't want to give the English too bad an impression of the 'Puritan maiden.'"

Elizabeth was making a hasty sketch of St. Martin's Cross with several of the spectators near it.

Bran and his master had left the sight-seers and were taking a stroll along the beach, which was doubtless more to the taste of both of them. Bran was in disgrace to some extent with his master, who spoke but little to him. Although the young man had an appearance of not seeing strange young ladies, he had a shrewd pair of Scotch eyes, and very little escaped him. He was quite well aware that his dog had brought discomfort and possibly danger to a very pretty young lady, and that she was one of an

American party, all of whom were young and good-looking, not excepting the one they seemed to regard as the leader. He was wondering as he walked along the shore if he ought to make the accident a pretext for speaking to the young ladies' chaperon and expressing his hope that no harm had been done by Bran's escapade. When he returned to the procession just as it was leaving the Cathedral to retrace its way to the boat, his mind was made up, only to await a suitable opportunity.

Very fair was the parting view of the historic island as they were rowed back to the steamer and from the deck watched it as long as it remained in sight. Mollie had a book containing accounts of the excavations that have been made and the treasures that have been brought to light, and she was engaged in comparing the views therein with the reality as the steamer got under way.

"How much more we shall enjoy 'White Wings' after this trip!" said Leta. "I wish I had my copy here."

"There is a little paper-covered copy in my hand-bag," said Miss Gray; and the girls smiled, for Miss Gray was proverbial for always having whatever they needed. Elizabeth passed over the bag, and Leta took out the book and began to find the places where Iona is so well described.

"Just see!" she exclaimed; "here is a reference to that odd little summer-house we saw in one of the gardens,—the little galley from a vessel's deck,—and oh, these descriptions of color and sunlight on the islands! It makes my heart ache to think we cannot see them looking so."

"Next time we come," put in Mollie, "we will have our own yacht, like the people in 'White Wings,' and then we can stay long enough to get all kinds of effects. Just see how lovely the Cathedral looks now, so soft and gray above the green of the land. I believe after all it is better to remember Iona as it looks on a dull day. It's a dreamy old place—isn't it, now?"

"'For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout the ruins gray,'"

quoted Elizabeth.

"Well," said Clare, holding up the bunch of posies she had just tied with a bit of twine taken from her pocket-book, "I shall always recall beautiful, peaceful thoughts of Iona when I look at these. I am afraid I did not think quite enough about good old Saint Columba and his monks and nuns. It was just delightful to walk about and pick flowers on that wonderful island; but I mean to read up Iona and the story of Columba and his monastery, one of these days."

"We shall soon be at Staffa," said Miss Gray. "You would better not carry any wraps ashore there. It is a hard walk to the cave, and you will be warm enough. Better put on your rubbers; they make the scramble over the stones easier. The seaweed at the landing is very treacherous footing."

It takes little more than a half-hour to go from Iona to Staffa, where the landing is again made by boat. On this particular day the crew of the lifeboat had decided on

a landing-place at some distance from the mouth of Fingal's Cave, as the water was too rough to venture nearer. It required considerable effort to hold the boat still enough for safety, even in the secluded cove whither the sturdy oarsmen had brought it. The rocks were carpeted with slimy brown rockweed, and very suggestive of a slide into the water. The girls were glad they had worn rubbers. With their gymnastic training they had little difficulty in stepping securely from rock to rock. Mollie

sang softly in Leta's ear, "Jordan's a hard road to travel." Miss Gray had experience enough in climbing and walking to realize that a halt for occasional rest more than pays in the long run; so they sat down several times on the curious dark columns of stone and recovered their breath.

"If Professor Merriam were here," said Leta with a little gasp of weariness, as she plodded over an extra difficult bit of the Causeway, "he would rush to the assistance

of all the struggling ladies in the party. It takes American men to be ministering angels on expeditions like this."

"Indeed it does," said Clare, seating herself for a moment. "Do you remember how that little Western gentleman, who was going over to the Sunday-school convention at London, used to help all the invalid ladies, and take all the babies to walk on deck? He was always doing a kindness for somebody. He said it did him good to see people comfortable."

"Just see that water boiling up against the rocks down there," said Mollie. "I hope I shall not lose my balance and roll off into it, for I verily believe not a man in this crowd would feel it his duty to save me."

As they started on again Miss Gray said, "English gentlemen have different views on such matters to those of Americans. Do you remember how very reserved the English gentlemen were on the steamer, and how astonished they looked at the efforts of the American gentlemen to make the ladies comfortable? But after a little while they imbibed the spirit to some extent themselves, and nothing could be kinder or more courteous than their attentions to us later on. In America we have a way of being obliged to help ourselves, and we get so accustomed to activity, and making things go, that we fall to helping other people from sheer force of habit. And yet I do think that Sir Philip Sidney's definition of a gentleman comes nearer being realized in our own dear land than anywhere else on the globe."

This long speech of Miss Gray, to which the girls had

listened with interest, had brought them to the entrance to the cave. The great Atlantic was pouring in its noisy waves in good force. Rolling along toward the farther end, they were dashed into masses of foam. A kind of stairway formed by uneven columns leads into the cave. It is guarded by a strong hand-rail of wire rope. After the toilsome walk to reach the cave, one is bewildered to behold the narrow stair, the plunging, seething waters just below, and their booming, echoing howl of disappointment as their course is stopped by the invincible basaltic mass ahead. It is impossible in the brief time allowed for seeing Staffa to find much satisfaction, or to carry away definite impressions.

"It seems cruel to go away and leave this wonderful, wonderful place," said Mollie, as they lingered a moment at the entrance. "No photograph can ever represent these grand organ sounds of the waves."

"Nor express the weariness of clambering over the Causeway, which we have got to do for a second time," said Elizabeth.

On their way back they sat in "Fingal's Wishing-Chair," as one of the rocks is called. As they went on they met Bran and his master on their way to the cave. It would hardly have been safe for Bran to make his appearance on the narrow stairway when the ladies were there. His master raised his cap politely as he passed, and Bran deigned to wave his great tail as a sign of recognition.

Clare found a few small plants growing in crevices of

the rock. She also picked a bit of brown rockweed, for she knew that any relic of Staffa would be a treasure when she was far away. Mollie and Leta made futile attempts to secure some bits of the hard volcanic rock, and were very grateful to the purser, who had come ashore with the party, and who succeeded in knocking off small specimens of the ironlike stone. Elizabeth contented herself with a few little white shells.

As they waited for the boat to be made ready, Mollie took her guidebook from a satchel she wore slung over her shoulder and read what it said about Staffa.

"Only think! They did not know anything about Fingal's Cave until the year 1772. Here are some beautiful lines by Sir Walter Scott."

"Please read them, Mollie," requested Leta, who was devoted to Scott. So Mollie read: —

"'The shores of Mull on the eastward lay,
And Ulva dark, and Colonsay,
And all the group of islets gay
That guard famed Staffa round.
Then all unknown its columns rose,
Where dark and undisturb'd repose
The cormorant had found,
And the shy seal had quiet home,
And weltered in that wondrous dome,
Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seemed, would raise
A minster to her Maker's praise!
Not for a meaner use ascend

Her columns, or her arches bend:
Nor of a theme less solemn tells
That mighty surge that ebbs and swells.
And still between each awful pause,
From the high vault an answer draws,
In varied tone prolonged and high,
That mocks the organ's melody.
Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To old Iona's holy fane.
That Nature's voice might seem to say,
'Well hast thou done, frail child of clay!
Thy humble powers that stately shrine
Task'd high and hard — but witness mine!'"

"What a fine comparison between Staffa and Iona!" said Miss Gray. "Professor Blackie says it takes but the one idea — *God* — to understand Staffa, while Iona requires that a person should be well instructed in history in order to appreciate that island. He tells a story of a French tourist who was so impressed with the sublimity of Fingal's Cave that he fell upon his knees and gave thanks to his Creator, who had given such a wonderful exhibition of His divine power and skill."

"How I should like to go into the cave in a row-boat!" said Mollie.

"It would have to be on a very calm day," said the purser, who overheard her, "else the boat would be broken against the rocks."

"Well, the next time we come we shall order smooth seas and blue skies," was Mollie's rejoinder. "In this

dreadful mist we cannot see anything that is not close by. What islands are those that we can just make out across there?"

"Those are Little Colonsay, Gometra, and Ulva. If we had clear weather you would get a fine view from here."

Mollie found these islands on her map, and then came the call to get into the boat, and soon they were leaving the "Isle of Columns." As they looked back they saw high up on the cliff a white object, which some of the men said was a sheep. The poor thing seemed shut off from all communication with its kind, and Clare fancied it longed to be taken away from its lonely perch; but the men said there were a number of sheep pastured on the island, and this one had only strayed a little from the others. At a short distance from the place where their boat had started they saw Bran and his master getting into the dory that had brought them to Staffa. They reached the *Fusilier* first and were at the gangway to assist in steadying the big boat while its passengers were transferred to the steamer. Bran was now all docility and repose after his run on shore, and even appeared grateful for the attentions bestowed upon him by the young ladies, with whom his master seemed to be on good terms.

Miss Gray's party decided to go below for lunch, and Bran and his master, whom they had now learned to call Mr. Muir, accompanied them. During the conversation it came out that Mr. Muir was on his way home from the University of Glasgow. He said he remembered passing

the party of American ladies just as they were about to enter a shop in Jamaica Street.

"That must have been the morning we bought our macintoshes," said Clare, rubbing Bran's long flat nose, which was laid confidingly in her lap. "We wanted to be protected against these queer Scotch mists of yours. We feel awfully disappointed at not seeing these lovely islands basking in the sunlight, the sky all turquoise and sapphire, the sea all amethyst and beryl. That is what we expected to find, and just see how gray and colorless everything is!"

"It is a pity that you did not have better luck. I am sorry on my own account, although I am used to Scotch weather. This is the first time I have been up this way, but there's a friend of mine from the university living up in Tobermory (I expect to see him for a moment this afternoon), who has often raved to me of the beauties of being out in a yacht in these waters. I don't think he could show us many beauties on a day like this. A good wind now would blow off the mists and give us some fine effects. I was talking with the captain, and he fears this will hold out for another day or so."

"After all our dreams of this region," sighed Mollie, "it does seem too bad. I have enjoyed everything that we have seen, though; haven't you, girls?"

"Yes, indeed," was the response, to which Leta added, "We could not talk about 'a gray Scotch day' if we had had sunlight for our trip, and so I mean to make much of the Iona and Staffa excursion in my notes."

"Oh, yes; it's your turn for the notes to-day, isn't it?"

Mr. Muir was greatly interested in learning about the notebook which the girls had kept ever since they left New York.

"Are you going to have an illustrated edition of it?" he inquired. He was surprised to learn that Elizabeth was the artist of the party, and begged to be permitted to look at her sketchbook. When he beheld himself and Bran his delight was evident.

"I have some photographs of Bran at my sister's house in Glasgow, and I will send for one for each of you if you will do me the honor to accept," he said, with a look of inquiry directed at Miss Gray.

She smilingly said, "We are all interested in Bran, and shall always associate him with Iona and Staffa as the famous dog belonging to Fingal. How did you come to give him his name?"

"A friend of my father, who was visiting us when Bran was given to me as a small pup, suggested the name and told us the origin. It seemed a good name for a big dog such as Bran was sure to grow, so I decided on calling him after the celebrated dog belonging to the old giant Fingal."

As the mist had now settled into a drizzling rain, the girls and Miss Gray concluded to remain in the luxurious cabin of the *Fusilier*, where the soft red cushions were far more attractive than the cold, wet deck. Mr. Muir promised to let them know when they drew near to Tobermory, and departed with Bran for "a look at the weather."

Leta wrote in her notebook, Mollie and Elizabeth added a few "current items" to letters for school friends, while Clare and Miss Gray prepared to take a nap. So the time passed until Mr. Muir came with the news that they were nearing the pier at Tobermory, where he was going ashore to meet his friend McLeod, who would

probably be down on the landing with his sisters and cousins. Perhaps the ladies would allow him to escort them on shore and present them to these friends of his?

Any diversion was welcome, and a very pleasant quarter of an hour was spent chatting with the bright-faced young Scotch ladies, who were as trimly attired and in as good spirits as if the June sunshine had been

abroad in all its splendor. McLeod and his father were most anxious that the American ladies should accept the hospitality of their home and await fair weather. It was difficult to convince them that vacation days were numbered and plans already laid must be carried out. Leta drew from her purse the folded slip of paper on which she had made a list of the places they were to visit, each with its corresponding date. The McLeods shook their heads over it, and the father said, "You're a clever little lassie, now. All the way from America to see dear old Scotland! And every day's work cut out before ye left your homes! They are wonderful folk, those Americans! It would not do to interfere with such a programme, but I heartily wish ye could remain with us till the sun shows his face again. It's a bonnier place to a stranger's eye then, but we love it in fair or foul"; and he waved his hand toward the pretty terraced town, and a fond look shone in his blue eyes.

Preparations were making for casting off the lines, and our party were warned on board. There was only time for a few parting words, and promises to stop over the next time they came to Tobermory. Mr. Muir requested Elizabeth, with an odd little mixture of shyness and persuasion, to let his friend Alec see the sketch of Bran. Then, with a hearty Scotch handshake from one and all, Miss Gray and her girls stepped on board the steamer, where Mr. Muir found them a good place to stand and view the town and Bay of Tobermory. The group on shore continued to extract promises to come

again as long as they could be heard. Clare took a last look at them through Mr. Muir's fieldglasses, and at length reported that they had turned their backs and were leaving the pier. The harper who accompanied the steamer now took his position to play, and the girls settled themselves in their old corner near the smoke-stack to listen.

"'The way was long, the wind was cold,'" quoted Leta.

"But this minstrel is *not* 'infirm and old,'" said Mollie, "though I believe I shall be soon if I don't succeed in getting warm."

"We will go below soon and have a cup of hot milk and water," said Miss Gray. "You know my theories on the subject of hot drinks?"

The girls smiled, but they had proved Miss Gray's theories to be right so many times that she was quite safe in introducing a new one. They soon went down to order the warming draught, and after their little lunch decided to remain in the cabin to rest. The scenery in the Sound of Mull is interesting on a clear day, but when the view is curtailed by the mist one can afford to leave it unattempted. Indeed, it was much more satisfactory to watch one's fellow-tourists in the cabin. Elizabeth sketched a group composed of an English gentleman and several ladies, who appeared to be trying hard to convince him of the truth of their several views of some question. His look of quizzical indifference and their looks of persuasive anxiety made a good study in facial

expression. Mr. Muir, with Bran at his heels, came through the cabin every now and then and promised to notify the party, whose escort he had tacitly become, when they were approaching Ardtornish Castle. Here Sir Walter Scott has laid the opening scene of the "Lord of the Isles," and the girls were very anxious to get a glimpse of it, as each had bought a tiny copy of the poem at Oban. A little beyond Ardtornish they had a view of the ruins of Duart Castle, and then they

wanted to see the Lady Rock. The captain told them the story of the unfortunate wife of MacLean of Duart, whose husband placed her upon this rock to be swept away by the tide, which when high completely covers it. The Lady Elizabeth was rescued just in time and taken to her ancestral home. Leta added Campbell's "Glenara" to the growing list of reading-matter which she was putting down in the back of her expense book.

The clouds lifted a little at this point in the journey,

and the sun looked forth for a short space. The view which spread out before them was one of the finest in all Scotland. In the foreground was Oban, with the Argyllshire hills rising beyond. Ben Cruachan towered above the rest. Ben Nevis and the Peaks of Glencoe shone out for a few short moments. The shore line was diversified by numerous inlets or lochs. Everything looked exquisite in the almost tremulous light, but in an instant all had changed again, and as the *Fusilier* came up to the Oban pier the mist had settled gray and chill upon the scene that had been all loveliness. The girls were thankful that they had enjoyed even a short period of sunlight; for, as Clare said, that was enough to show them how wonderful a region they were passing through. It would be a delicious memory.

CHAPTER XIII.

BACK AT OBAN.

Miss Gray prescribed blanket gowns and a "horizontal position" while they awaited the preparation of tea. She also ordered fires in their rooms for the evening. When they came up from tea their rooms were cheery with warmth, and they spent the evening cosily talking, writing, and doing such bits of mending as tourists occasionally find needful. Elizabeth and Mollie went out to the shop where the woollen goods were so fascinating, to invest in a tourist hat that Elizabeth declared would haunt her all the days of her life unless she became its possessor. Mollie made a visit to the jeweller's to purchase a certain pretty brooch with Iona shells set in it. She had several long strings of shells, bought from the children on the island. Mr. Muir had given them each one of the rough greenish pebbles which he had picked up on his ramble with Bran at Iona.

When the two shoppers returned to the hotel they found Clare labelling her posies, with the place and date of gathering. She laid each bunch in a separate piece of paper, folded it flat, and placed it in a guidebook, where it would be pressed. This was easier than carrying about a portfolio. Leta was lying on the bed resting after having made up her notes for the day. Miss

Gray had been reading to them from the "Lord of the Isles." Elizabeth passed round her new cap for inspection.

"You may all try it on," she said.

Leta sprang up to be the first, and went to the long mirror in the wardrobe door to see the effect.

"How many photos did you buy, Mollie?" asked Clare.

"Not one, upon honor," and a united "*Why?*" went up from the group.

"I am going to sit down this minute," said Mollie, receiving her little shell brooch from Miss Gray, who had been admiring it, "and look over the photos I have, for I truly cannot tell what they are."

"Take part of my table," said Clare; "I do not need all the room for my souvenirs."

Miss Gray suggested that there was an unused table in her room, and Mollie and Leta went to bring it in. Elizabeth took one corner of it for her sketchbook and worked up several hasty studies made during the day. She made an enlarged drawing of Bran's head, which she said she should send to her father. "He likes dogs, and he will be glad to see that his daughter is industrious. I hope Mr. Muir will not forget his promise to give us Bran's photograph; don't you, girls?"

"Lovely old doggie!" said Mollie, glancing over at the drawing; "how shy he was at first, and would not pay us the least attention until he saw that his master was friendly. He is a thorough Scotch dog, not given to making chance acquaintances."

"He actually seemed to feel ashamed and sorry that he had frightened me, and afterward tried to make up for it. Every time he came near me he would lay his long head up against me and look up in my face so confidingly. He seemed to be trying to ask my forgiveness."

"O Clare, you're a regular old Sentimentality," laughed Elizabeth. "He just thought you had a piece of biscuit for him and was coaxing you for it."

"You did not see his eyes; they were full of pleading. Miss Gray saw how earnest he was; she was sitting close to me; didn't you, Miss Gray?"

"I think Bran is a most gentlemanly bow-wow, and I have no doubt he is intelligent enough to realize that he came very near doing serious mischief. Mr. Muir told me that a shepherd who lived near his home had the training of Bran when he was growing up. He was a man very fond of animals, and took great pains in teaching them and drawing out their sagacity."

"There! I knew it was so," said Clare, her eyes expressing gratitude for Miss Gray's championship of Bran. Clare always had convictions about the good in people and things, and held to them gently but firmly.

It was now nearly half past ten, and Miss Gray suggested that they should commence preparations for the night. Their rest before tea had brightened them up, and they had all done a very good evening's work. They were now ready for a long night's rest, and did not rise till late the next morning, which was Sunday.

During breakfast they inquired of "Mr. Thank You"

about the churches, and decided to attend the little Episcopal chapel of St. John, or the "Church of England," as the waiter styled it. The weather still remained showery, but the girls were becoming used to it. As nobody else seemed to mind the rain, they felt they must also be brave about it. After church they walked about through some of the "English lanes," as Leta called them, because they looked like those in English pictures. Indeed, everything at Oban is managed on a somewhat English basis. It is so completely given over to tourists and summer visitors that those who once knew it in its old simplicity lament over the change. The one desire of its present residents is to get all the money they can during the season. The town is filled with hotels and shops, and of course the tourist is very glad to find himself so well accommodated. He can set out from Oban and find all the wild, picturesque nature he desires. It has become, indeed, the "Charing Cross of the Highlands," and it must pay the penalty.

Miss Gray had a way of learning a lesson from any state of affairs, and those who accompanied her on a journey soon acquired something of her capacity of insight. The growth of Oban did not pass without impression on the girls. They agreed, however, that, just as it was, they dearly loved it. As they walked through the lanes they caught occasional glimpses through the gateways of the picturesque villas and their surrounding gardens. Over the high stone walls beside the way came glossy trailing ivy, which had outgrown its space

on the inner side of the wall. In the gardens were flowering vines, and roses nearly covered the houses. The growth seemed everywhere tropical in its luxuriance. The soft, misty atmosphere is good for vegetation. In one garden they saw very curious trees, growing stiff and tall, and with an odd foliage that seemed like the descriptions of Australian trees.

In reply to Leta's question Miss Gray said, "They call the trees 'Monkey Puzzles,' because the leaves grow so queerly and are so sharp-pointed that a monkey can find no way of climbing them. I was much interested in them when I was here before, but nobody could tell me anything of their botanical history. They have them in their gardens farther north, and perhaps we can discover something of their native place and how they happen to have been brought to Scotland."

After walking along the esplanade on the water-front the party returned to the hotel to rest and await dinner. There were several places to which they desired to go, but the morrow's journey was to be so long it seemed best to take but one short walk toward evening, and to spend the remainder of the day resting comfortably in their rooms. The uncompleted Hydropathic Establishment on the hill just beyond the town was very attractive to view; it looked like an old castle. Then there were the two ruins, Dunolly and Dunstaffnage, which could hardly be resisted.

"The guidebook says the Sacred Stone used to be kept in Dunstaffnage," said Mollie. "That is the stone

that Edward the First carried away to England, isn't it?"

"Yes; it is now in Westminster Abbey. You can see it there under the seat of the Coronation Chair," replied Miss Gray.

Their walk had now led them to the outskirts of one end of the town, and Clare discovered close by the road a great rock, in whose crevices were growing exquisite little ferns, and wild flowers that were of many hues.

Each one picked a handful as a souvenir of this last walk in fair Oban. Leta had begun to follow Clare's example of keeping a flower or two from every place they visited. It was a peaceful evening, with a Sabbath calm over town and bay.

"We shall not be likely to forget our last evening in Oban, but the flowers will make it more real," was Clare's remark as she added a last pink floweret to her bunch.

They found Mr. Muir and Bran awaiting them at the hotel. Mr. Muir had come to see if they were ready for their early start on the morrow, and to tell them that he had decided to go too.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CALEDONIAN CANAL.

As the steamer was to leave Oban at six o'clock Monday morning, breakfast had been ordered brought to their rooms at half past five. Everything was strapped and ready to be carried down to the pier, and with hats and ulsters on the tourists drank their cocoa and ate a sandwich or two. They could get an early dinner on the boat, and need not attempt an extensive breakfast. Miss Gray always insisted on enough to be just a

"break-fast"—and something hot to drink. She said it often prevented illness, and travellers should always take precautions: it paid in the long run. Mollie and Leta stood arm in arm in the window, taking a last look at the bay. Clare was putting one of the fallen blossoms of the handsome fuchsia between the leaves of her little expense book.

"People are going down to the pier! There is Mr. Muir, with Bran at his heels! And he has a porter carrying his bags and rug. And there go those two girls and their father,—the ones we saw on the Iona trip. I hope we shall discover to-day whether they are Americans or Scotch people."

These announcements came from Leta, who turned from the window to pick up her luggage, as the procession was about to start out for its day's march. Clare staid a moment after the rest to see that none of their belongings had been forgotten, and to give one little farewell glance into both the rooms, where they had enjoyed themselves and felt at home in the last few days. The house was very quiet as the party passed out; not even a servant was to be seen. Their bill had been settled the evening before, so they had nothing to do but to leave the Imperial, with good wishes and the hope of seeing it again.

They found a row of unoccupied seats on the steamer, where they placed their luggage, having decided that the air was rather chilly for them to sit still. So they walked about the deck, watching the passengers who came late

and the still sleeping town. In a few minutes they were under way, and the scenery claimed their attention. The first few miles showed familiar views. They passed again Dunolly and Dunstaffnage. The Lady Rock and Lismore Island were near enough to be seen. The hills upon the latter were partly obscured by trails of morning mist. As they passed the Dog's Stone, Mr. Muir joined them and told them the story of the rock where Fingal is said to have chained his dog Bran.

"How would you like to be chained there, Bran?" said Clare as that shaggy individual came up to her and laid his head against her caressingly. Bran waved his tail as if he feared no harm from any such contingency, and looked with bright eyes at a pair of seagulls that were circling round the Dog's Rock.

The captain joined the young ladies who seemed to enjoy everything so much, and pointed out many interesting spots. The natural Arch is a curious rocky termination of the bluff near Airds Bay. Stalker Castle is a fragmentary ruin situated on a little rocky island at the upper end of the Lynn of Lorne, which lies between Lismore and the mainland. It was used by King James the Sixth as a hunting-lodge.

Presently the captain said eagerly, "Now then, for a look at Ben Nevis! Straight ahead he stands!"

Every one looked in the direction indicated and beheld the grand old Ben, his head still shrouded in mist but showing his rugged sides. The sturdy captain

"dropped into poetry" and quoted with a good Scotch accent, —

"'Oh for a sight of Ben Nevis,
Methinks I see him now,
As the morning sunlight crimsons
The snow-wreath on his brow.
As he shakes away the shadows
His heart the sunshine thrills,
And he towers high and majestic
Amid a thousand hills.'"

"You will have a better view of him when you get to Banavie, — and the day is likely to be fine," he added as he turned away to give directions for the next landing.

This was Ballachulish Pier, and at the name a smile passed over Mollie's face.

"Do you remember, girls, that young Scotchman on the steamer who sang the ridiculously long song about the 'Ballachulish Temperance Brigade'? This must be the place referred to."

The girls almost envied the people who got off here and took the coach for Glencoe. They could see the guardian conical hill at the entrance of the glen, the Pap of Glencoe. As they settled into their places when the steamer was again under way, Miss Gray read from a little scrap pasted into her guidebook the following finely descriptive lines by her favorite, Professor Blackie: —

"'GLENCOE.

"'The snow is white on the Pap of Glencoe
And all is bleak and dreary,
But gladness reigns in the vale below,
And all is blithe and cheery
Where the old Macdonald, stout and true,
Sits in the hall which his fathers knew,
Sits, with the sword which his father's drew
On the old wall glancing clearly,
Where the dry logs blaze from the huge old hearth,
And the old wine flows that fans the mirth
Of the friends that love him dearly.

. . . . .

"'And on the hills a curse doth lie,
That will not die with years;
And ofttimes 'neath a scowling sky,
Through the black rent, where the torrent grim
Leaps 'neath the huge crag's frowning rim,
The wind comes down with a moan and a sigh;
And a voice, like the voice of a wail and a cry,
The lonely traveller hears —
A voice, like the voice of Albyn weeping
For the sorrow and the shame
That stained the British soldier's name
When kingship was in butcher's keeping,
And power was honor's foe;
Weeping for scutcheons rudely torn,
And worth disowned and glory shorn,
And for the valiant-hearted men
That once were mighty in the glen
Of lonely, bleak Glencoe.'"

"How pathetically he describes the place where the cruel massacre took place! I can almost see how gloomy it must be, and hear the wind coming 'down with a moan and a sigh,'" said Mollie, with a little shudder.

"It was King William's soldiers who killed the poor people whose homes they were visiting, was it not?" asked Clare.

"Yes: he excused himself by saying he had not read the order before signing it,—rather a poor excuse for a king to make. A friend of mine who took the coach ride through Glencoe said the desolation of the region was oppressive. She had always had a fancy for 'desolate' landscapes in art or nature, but Glencoe went beyond even her desires. Nevertheless, I hope sometime to take the trip. Would you like to join me?"

"Anywhere, Miss Gray, as long as it's you and Scotland," replied Mollie, voicing the acquiescence of the group.

"Why, here's another landing-place!" announced Elizabeth, who was standing up.

Mr. Muir here came up to tell them that they were coming to Fort William. Bran, seeing preparations made for going ashore, was eagerly listening to what his master said, anticipating a run. "We can all go ashore for a few minutes; it will be a change and a rest. Bran is very anxious to be off. — Here, sir, here; wait a bit and let the ladies go first," said Mr. Muir, as Bran edged his way to the gangplank, only to slink back obediently as his master called. Clare slipped her hand into his collar to console him, and he stood patiently by her side until the way was clear for them to pass over the plank together.

There was a good deal of freight to be handled, and they staid at the pier nearly a quarter of an hour. Our party enjoyed the bustle very much, and thought Fort William would be a very pleasant place to stay. Mr. Muir explained to Leta what the great sign not far from the pier meant, — "Long John, Dew of Ben Nevis."

It was the advertisement of the famous whiskey distillery which is near Fort William.

"What a shame to give such a poetical name to such a horrible thing as whiskey!" said Mollie, rather indignant at the combination.

Here the passengers were warned aboard, and Miss

Gray's party found places to stand and view the receding town. At the east end of the town are the remains of the fort from which the place gets its name. It was first built in Cromwell's time, and restored by William III. Just beyond Fort William are the ruins of Inverlochy Castle, which must have been a noble structure, and is famous in history.

A woman and a girl who got on the boat at Fort William stood near Clare, who was astonished at the beautiful hothouse roses which the woman had in her hand.

"Excuse me, but where did those lovely roses grow?" Clare asked her.

"In my sister's garden," said the woman, looking shyly pleased to have the young lady notice them.

She selected several of the finest and handed them to Clare, who said she should like to see the garden where they grew.

Since leaving Oban in the morning our party had sailed through the two lochs which lead up to the Caledonian Canal,—Loch Linnhe and Loch Aber. At the upper end of Loch Aber all passengers for the canal must leave the steamer and ride in a little omnibus to Banavie, where the luxurious canal steamer awaits them. Mr. Muir decided to walk for exercise, and to contribute to Bran's happiness as well. When he reached the place of embarking he presented Miss Gray with a bunch of sweetbrier roses, gathered during his walk. Elizabeth pinned them on to Miss Gray's dress, and would not allow her to share them, as she wanted to do.

"They look too sweet just where they are, and you will not disturb them, will you?" she coaxed.

"But the souvenir florists ought to have one each to commemorate our dusty drive from Corpach," urged Miss Gray.

"You can give them to us when they are withered more," said Clare; "they will do just as well to press. A good many of my posies have been sadly wilted before I could press them."

Mollie and Leta were much interested in the movements of a cow, which was to be a passenger on their boat. She was very timid—poor creature!—and it was some time before she could be persuaded to step on to the plank.

It was Clare's day for the notes, and she was already busy at the little writing-table in the pretty cabin of the *Glengarry*. The day had proved fair, and the views

were beautifully clear. Historic and romantic associations seemed to multiply along the course of Miss Gray's party. "Every *inch* of ground is famous in history and song," wrote Clare in the notebook.

The first few miles of the Caledonian Canal, from Banavie to Gairlochy, were the most difficult to construct. The rushing waters from the neighboring hills had to be disposed of, and were carried under the canal into the River Lochy, which runs parallel and connects the two larger bodies of water, Loch Aber and Loch Lochy.

From near Gairlochy the party feasted their eyes on the finest view they had yet had of snow-capped Ben Nevis. Mollie, who held the guidebook and was dubbed "Mrs. Jarley" by Elizabeth, announced that this would be the "positively last appearance" of his Benship. Miss Gray said Clare must not be too devoted to her notes, for it would not do to lose any of the lovely sights of this canal journey. The notes could be made up from their guidebooks after they got to the North.

"Just dot down on a bit of paper the things that attract you most and it will all come back to you. Come out and sit with us on deck now, and let the notebook go," Miss Gray said, looking in at the cabin door and holding out her hand for Clare.

Elizabeth was attempting a sketch of a French touring party who were cosily lunching together on the contents of a well-provided basket. Near them sat a couple somewhat German in appearance. The man looked

like an artist, and his bride, if bride she were, gazed stolidly upon the landscape with no apparent appreciation. Every now and then the husband called her attention to some point that interested him. She let her eyes follow the direction indicated for a moment only, then settled herself to look placidly at nothing in particular. Bran and his master were down on the forward deck, where the unwilling bovine passenger stood, now placidly chewing her cud and looking about her with apparent interest in her journey.

Leta was diligently reading the guidebook with Mollie to see what was coming next.

"Oh, that is where Lochiel used to live!" she exclaimed, as "Achnacarry Castle" came in view. "You remember, Mollie,—

> 'Lochiel, Lochiel! beware of the day
> When the lowlands shall meet thee in battle array.'

Oh, doesn't it make it seem *real?*"

"And Prince Charlie hid in a cave somewhere near here," continued Mollie, reading farther down on the page. "I should like to *walk* all through this region, and stop and see all the famous spots just as long as I wanted to."

Miss Gray and Clare had been walking about the deck, looking back over the canal at several brown-sailed boats that made a picturesque appearance. As they stood by the railing they were approached by the two young ladies who had previously been observed by our

party, and about whose nationality there had been some question. One of them now spoke in unmistakable, American accents.

"We have wanted so much to speak to you this morning," she said. "My sister said she knew you were countrywomen of ours, and just now she saw a label on your valise, which told her what she had guessed before. So we decided to speak to you right away."

"We have also had a good deal of curiosity about your party," said Miss Gray. "Your father, as we supposed him to be, looked rather like a Scotch gentleman, and your ulsters were so unmistakably Scotch that we remained in doubt."

"It is our uncle who is with us," said the younger Miss Farmer, who had given her card to Miss Gray; "he is often taken for a Scotchman, and he *is* of Scotch descent, though not very near. We came across with uncle, and are going as far as London with him, and there my sister and I are to join a party from Boston and go on the Continent."

A good deal of pleasant conversation followed, and it was discovered that Miss Gray and the Misses Farmer had studied at the same college and had several mutual friends. It was further brought to light that although the Farmer party had crossed from America by a much finer and more expensive steamer, they had had a very stupid time while crossing, and a very dull, unsocial set of passengers.

"All because you did not have Miss Gray to plan

your trip for you," said Mollie, who with Leta had come up to the group, very glad to make the acquaintance of these fellow-travellers.

"We had an unusually fine lot of cabin passengers," said Miss Gray, waiving the unqualified compliment bestowed by Mollie. "Such good fortune is rare, and hardly to be expected twice in a lifetime."

Their uncle appearing on deck and apparently looking for them caused the Misses Farmer to say good by for the present. Miss Gray's party went to the saloon for dinner, and afterwards found amusement in feeding the beautiful silver-white gulls which follow the canal steamers looking for food. Mr. Muir and Bran came up and joined them, the latter eyeing the greedy movements of the birds with disfavor.

"You would not be so greedy, would you, Bran?" asked Clare.

Bran opened his eyes wide as he looked into her face, with an expression that seemed to say, "You *know* I wouldn't, don't you?"

Presently they came to a lock, and were all much amused at the antics of a collie, who was bent on helping the men who moved the machinery that opened and shut the gates. Elizabeth tried a rough sketch of the novel scene, but the dog and men were not still long enough to be good subjects.

"You will get off at Fort Augustus, will you not?" asked Mr. Muir of Miss Gray, in his usual respectful manner.

"Oh, yes; I think the change will do us all good. I went up in the tower at the monastery when I was there before. Once will suffice, I think, but perhaps my girls may like to go. We shall go through the buildings at any rate."

"We shall be there in about half an hour, the captain tells me. Bran is anxious for a run," said Bran's master.

Most of the passengers seemed to share the desire to change quarters for a time, and, notwithstanding the varied beauty of their surroundings, looked forward rather eagerly to the long stop at the locks near Fort Augustus. Indeed, a dozen or more of the gentlemen got off at Kyltra Locks to walk the intervening two miles.

Mollie read aloud what the guidebook had to tell about the old fort and the new Benedictine College upon the same site. Soon the fine early-English, Gothic buildings of this institution came into view, and the boat came to a standstill. The passengers went ashore and scattered in various directions, as business or pleasure prompted. The girls were keenly interested in what they saw during the short walk to the college. Close to the landing were a number of women, who had milk and oatcakes to sell. Miss Gray said they would enjoy a glass of milk better as they returned from their walk. In a few moments they passed the famous shop of John McDonald, where the Highland crooks are temptingly displayed.

"Oh, I want one!" exclaimed Mollie, halting before the door. "It would be too lovely all tied with ribbons —"

"Do you suppose we could manage to carry them all the way, Miss Gray?" appealed Leta.

"When we come back; not now," Miss Gray said. So the party proceeded, and the girls discussed the plan of getting a bit of ribbon at each place they visited for the adornment of these souvenirs of Fort Augustus.

Having paid the admission fee of one shilling, a guide took Miss Gray's party through the various buildings which comprise the establishment. He explained to them that the college is intended for the education of the sons of wealthy Catholics, and that the whole institution is in charge of the Benedictine Order. Here and there they met one of the monks in his long dark robe, and caught sight of the boys similarly dressed. Their guide was an elderly man, unmistakably Scotch in manners and speech, and it seemed a little odd to think of him as a Romanist, especially when in going through the chapel he crossed himself and bowed his knee before the shrines. Still they knew their Scotch history pretty well, and could better see how such things can come about. Mollie, Leta, and Elizabeth decided to go up into the great tower for the view. Clare and Miss Gray remained in the cloisters to enjoy the architectural beauty and save their strength.

There was time enough to purchase the shepherds' crooks and the milk before the boat was ready to enter Loch Ness, the last of the three lochs which suggested the Caledonian Canal. Mr. Muir and Bran, fresh from

a ramble across the fields, came up to the door of the shop in time to assist in the choice of the crooks.

The steamer makes a number of stops along Loch Ness. At Invermorriston they caught a glimpse of the old family mansion of the Grants of Glenmorriston.

"My grandmother was a Grant," said Miss Gray, as she watched the mansion out of sight.

The steamer always waits at a pier near the Falls of Foyers, so that passengers may visit the falls. The Misses Farmer and their uncle were going up, so Miss Gray allowed her girls to join them. She said she had walked up on her previous visit, and found it a pretty steep climb. As the falls were very famous, she thought the girls ought to see them, but she advised them to take their crooks and use them in climbing. Of course Bran and his master improved their opportunity to get off and do a little walking. Bran had learned by this time that he must not jostle young ladies on gangways, and decorously kept in the background until his turn came. While the boat tarried for the falls party, Miss Gray took a short nap in the cabin, as the day grew long in spite of the scenery.

The returning party of Americans reported a little disappointment concerning the falls, for the dry weather had reduced the water supply. The Misses Farmer, their uncle, and Mollie had seen Niagara and Yosemite, and were not easily satisfied.

"If it wasn't dear old Scotland I should have laughed at the little stream that came splashing down over the

rocks," said Mollie, as she bent over Bran to fasten the spray of wild rose that was slipping from his collar.

All agreed that the surrounding mountains were grand, and with plenty of water the Falls of Foyers must merit some of the fine things that Robert Burns has written about them. The poet is said to have written his lines with a pencil while standing by the falls. There are but twelve lines, and they seem to have been left unfinished.

> "Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
> And still below the horrid caldron boils."

Even Bran had had enough walking, and was content to stretch himself comfortably on the deck and indulge in a very light doze, occasionally opening one eye wide to see that his friends were all disposed to be as quiet as he. Clare laid a spray or two of bluebells from the falls in a railway guide, and scribbled the place and date beside them. Mollie added to her list of "photos to get," "Falls of Foyers (in wet weather)." Elizabeth was more alert than usual: she wanted to get a little sketch of Urquhart Castle, provided the boat staid near it long enough. "I promised my cousin Jessie, who married an Urquhart, that I would see as much as possible of Urquhart Castle, so as to tell her and her husband about it,—his father used to roam about it in his boyhood, and often spoke of it to his children. I really believe that castle was one of my objects in coming abroad,—you know I came near not

having any," said Elizabeth, unclasping the rubber band about her sketchbook and making ready for a new sketch.

"Your sketchbook does not indicate that you have continued to be without an object, Miss Tracey. It shows you to have been very diligent in studying the scenery. I have been wondering if all American ladies are as energetic as those in your party," and Mr. Muir looked inquiringly about the group, really anxious to know if they were fair samples of American girls.

"Oh, we vary," explained Mollie, after a pause. "You see, this particular party of Americans have been 'Miss Gray's girls' for a good while, and you can't help being energetic when you know how much Miss Gray always accomplishes."

"I don't look like it now," said Miss Gray, unclosing her eyes to give Mollie a look of mock reproach.

"Well, you have been through this region before, and I remember the photographs you collected to illustrate the Caledonian Canal, and the nice little descriptions written out beside the views in your scrapbook. I should not wonder, either, if you had been planning something new even while you sat with your eyes closed and seemed to be resting." Mollie said this with an affectionate look at her teacher, of whose accomplishments she held a very high estimate.

"I ought to be kept up to my highest standard," Miss Gray said, "when I am in company with such appreciative young friends. I confess I have been think-

ing out what photographs I shall get to illustrate 'In Far Lochaber.'"

"I knew it!" exclaimed Mollie, triumphantly.

"This must be your castle, Liz dear," announced Leta, who had risen to see where the boat was going to stop.

It was a beautifully picturesque ruin that stood before them on a projecting point of land, as the boat slowed up to Temple Pier to take on a few passengers. A merry party of picnickers made the old ruin a *tableau vivant*, and the girls could not resist waving a friendly hand at them. Elizabeth did what she could to fix the scene in her sketchbook, but said:—

"I shall have to get Jessie the nicest photograph I can find of Castle Urquhart, for my sketch will never be able to give the lovely surroundings."

Mollie read her these lines from a poem in her guide-book:—

"Stop, artist! with your sketching book
For gin ye can but tak' it,
At Urquhart Castle ye should look—
'Tis close to Drumnadrochit."

Mr. Muir went ashore for a moment and returned with a little blue wild flower for Clare, who had expressed a wish to have a memento from this pretty landing-place.

The afternoon was wearing away; the end of the lovely canal journey was not far off. Regret and weariness struggled for possession of Miss Gray and her girls. After a time they came in sight of Tomnahurich, the curious boat-shaped hill which rises near Inverness, and which tradition says was piled above the remains of the old prophet-bard, Thomas of Ercildoune, and served him for a grand, enduring tomb. Taking the hint from this legend, the people of Inverness have reserved this hill for a "city of the dead," and made of it their beautiful cemetery. As they came up to the pier at Muirtown a grand view of Inverness was spread before them. Tired as they were, the view woke them to new enthusiasm, and Clare said she almost wished they were going to stay there over night. Miss Gray wished the same, but said: —

"I shall see if Uncle Duncan has sent me a telegram when we go to the Station Hotel for supper. I feel pretty sure he will want us to come straight on to his house to-night. He is very energetic himself, and does not like delays by the way. He will say, 'The lassies can rest better in Aunt Jessie's beds than in a noisy hotel.' We must try to pull through."

"We shall all feel better when we have washed up and had supper. Perhaps we can see a little of the city afterwards," said Elizabeth.

Mollie had drawn her guidebook out of the strap to give a last hasty look for the sights of Inverness.

Miss Gray signalled a cabman from the steamer, and they were soon being driven to the Highland Railway Station. They had a passing view of the castle, and thought the dwelling houses they saw quite interesting, with their clustered chimneys and shutterless windows looking cheerfully forth from rather grimy stone walls. In about half an hour they were seated in the pleasant coffee-room of the Station Hotel, discussing a delicious tea.

CHAPTER XV.

NORTHWARD BY RAIL.

Uncle Duncan had sent a telegram as Miss Gray had expected. It said:—

"We expect you to-night; impatient to see you. Do not fail us."

"That is just like Uncle Duncan," said Miss Gray, after reading the message to the girls. "He would be as disappointed as a child if we did not get there to-night. We shall have to leave Inverness sights for our return from the North."

"It is so lovely of Mr. Gray to want us all so much, we can afford to give up almost anything, I think," was Clare's gentle response. The girls were all agreed.

"I think it will be pretty nice to be in somebody's home again," said Leta, with a little sigh of remembrance for her own much-loved home.

"Homesick, Leta?" quizzed Elizabeth, reaching over and patting Leta's shoulder; "wishing you were home?"

"Not really home, you know," replied Leta; "but it would be nice to see them all this very minute, wouldn't it?"

They were all by themselves in the second-class compartment, in which they were speeding away to Ross-shire. Elizabeth started—

"All the world is sad and dreary,"

Leta and Mollie hummed an accompaniment, and they soon forgot their foreign surroundings in the associations called up by the old song they had so often sung together while out in the little *Princess* on the lake at school.

"Why, what became of Mr. Muir?" exclaimed Clare, as after a while silence had settled upon the group.

"Sure enough, we forgot all about him, we were so anxious to get our supper. I did not see him in any of the cabs coming up from the boat; did you, girls?" asked Elizabeth.

"He told me he had a married sister living in Inverness, and that he would take his tea at her house. He probably walked with Bran. He is too thoroughly Scotch to get into a cab when he has time to walk. He said he should see us again, so he may be going North. We must look out for him at the stations," Miss Gray said.

And sure enough, at the next stopping-place there appeared Bran and his master walking along the platform and looking at the carriage windows in search of some one. Off came his cap, and a smile brightened his rather anxious face as he sprang to the door, which Mollie was hastening to open.

"I beg your pardon," he said, addressing Miss Gray, with his cap still in his hand, "I missed you somehow in leaving the boat. Bran was very eager to be off, but I had some golf sticks and a fishing-rod down in the

steward's room, which I nearly forgot, and at the last I had to run below and get them. When I came up you had gone."

Bran was overjoyed to see his American friends once more, and in response to Clare's invitation had leaped into the carriage.

"We are riding in the guard's van. I happen to be acquainted with most of the guards on this route, and they generally take me in with them when I have Bran to dispose of. What do you say to going back to our quarters, Master Bran?"

"Oh, can't he stay, — and you, too?" cried Clare, with a hand on Bran's head as it reposed on her knee.

Mr. Muir looked at Miss Gray as wistfully as Bran did at Clare, and she said: —

"Would it be allowable? If the guards don't object, I think we can all be comfortable in here together; it will be more cheerful, for some of us are feeling a little homesick after our long day's journey."

Mr. Muir was evidently very grateful for the per-

mission, and said he would go and explain to the guard and then come back.

After they were settled and the train moving on again, conversation turned upon the destination of each party. When Miss Gray told Mr. Muir about her uncle he said quickly, —

"And is your uncle Mr. Duncan Gray of Tain?"

Upon Miss Gray's replying in the affirmative, he continued: —

"This is a coincidence, for Mr. Gray and his wife are among our best friends. They are often at our house since we came to live at Fearn. My parents knew them formerly when both families resided in Wick."

Then Miss Gray and Mr. Muir had a long chat about numerous mutual friends of whom they had both heard, and the friendly feeling which had already arisen for the young Scotchman seemed now to have been well grounded. It was amusing to see him give free play to the kindly disposition which underlay his deferential and somewhat reserved politeness. He was, of course, quite at home on the road he was now travelling, and having seen his sister had learned the latest family news. The girls forgot their weariness to some extent as he told them stories of the exploits of his young brothers, who, he said, were not over fond of school, but were very good collectors of birds' eggs, of which they had secured some rare ones at great hazard.

"You will be coming over to 'Kinlossie' — that is our place — with Mr. and Mrs. Gray, and the lads will be for

showing you the eggs by way of entertaining you. But not a word will the rascals have to say unless you draw it out of them. They're a sly pair, those lads."

Mr. Muir laughed as he recalled the shy company manners of his two still-tongued but wise-headed young brothers, and Mollie said she was anxious to see them.

"Mollie will make them talk before they know what they are about," said Leta. "My little brother and sister are always wild over Mollie, and talk about her for days after she leaves our house."

"Scotch children are different from American children, though," said Elizabeth. "Mamma used to tell us about some little Scotch children she saw in Edinburgh. They were so polite and old-fashioned in their talk. They always waited to be spoken to after they had said, 'Good morning, Mrs. Tracey; are you feeling quite well after your night's rest?' They were just like little men and women, mamma said."

"And how are the children in America?" asked Mr. Muir, rather puzzled to know how children in Scotland could awaken so much interest in an American lady and her family.

"Did you never hear of 'Young America'?" asked Elizabeth. "Well, some of the very wise people in our country declare that it is the children whom the parents obey and not the reverse and proper state of things. I cannot say how true this is. I only know we are all very fond of our parents and they of us, and perhaps some

parents do give in too much to their children. Perhaps Miss Gray will tell us what she thinks about it."

Miss Gray said it was a broad subject, and there were things to be said on both sides. She thought the best American parents were judicious in managing their children, and that there was a beautiful union between them. The spirit of freedom in America makes it harder to control children than in the old countries.

They were nearing Nigg, the next station to the one where Mr. Muir would leave them. He went forward to the guards' van to get his luggage together, and said he would see them at Fearn Station, as the train would wait there several minutes.

After he and Bran had left them, Miss Gray's party began to get ready themselves to leave the railway carriage, as they would soon reach Tain, their own stopping-place.

"How is my hat?" asked Mollie, as she straightened up from the corner, into which she had gradually sunk and nearly fallen asleep. "Do I 'look presentable,' as mamma would say? She always tells me I don't when I am travelling with her. Long days' journeys will not improve me, I am afraid," and Mollie applied Clare's little whisk broom vigorously to her dusty hat, which she had taken off for closer inspection. By the time the train came to the station at Fearn they were all brushed and shaken into order, and eagerly viewed the sights about them. They saw a wagonette waiting for a party who got out of a first-class carriage, and were quite interested in the wel-

come which the ladies and gentlemen received from a young man in a brown velvet shooting-jacket, who sprang forward, with a couple of handsome collies at his heels. Then they saw Mr. Muir and Bran go toward a dog-cart that was a short way from the platform, the driver being quite occupied in keeping his horse, a young colt, not very thoroughly broken to harness, from backing over the embankment near by. Mr. Muir strode to the colt's head, laid his hand on the bridle, and seemed to whisper something into his ear. A tremble of delight went over the colt, he neighed softly, put his head on Mr. Muir's shoulder, and seemed quite pacified. The man sprang out and went to bring the luggage. Bran relaxed his usual dignity and superintended everything with nervous delight. When all was disposed of, Mr. Muir turned quickly to find his friends in the railway carriage.

"That is my colt," he said. "He is a little nervous yet in the harness, but now he knows I am here he is all right." He held his cap in his hand as he explained his delay, and continued: "I will not take a long leave of you and your young ladies, Miss Gray. I will be over to Mr. Gray's to-morrow and see how you have stood your journey. You will find Mr. Gray awaiting you at Tain Station. He is sure to be on hand. I wish you good by and a pleasant stay with us in the North."

Bran stood on his hind legs and gave his paw to be shaken by each of his lady friends. Then the guard came up, closing the carriage doors, and the train began to move off. The girls nodded to Mr. Muir, who had

got into the dog-cart and taken the reins from the man. Bran leaped upon the back of the cart and steadied himself for the homeward drive. Mr. Muir waved his whip and the next moment was lost to sight as the colt sped like an arrow along the hard, smooth road.

It was nearing ten o'clock in the evening, but was so light it seemed no later than six.

CHAPTER XVI.

UNCLE DUNCAN'S HOUSE.

YES, there was Uncle Duncan on the platform, eagerly awaiting the arrival of the train, which he pronounced to be quite behind time. He put up his watch, however, and concluded to overlook the delay as he saw his niece's face looking out from the carriage in search of him.

"And so you're here at last, lassie," he said, giving his hand and a hearty kiss to Miss Gray, who stepped out in advance of her girls. "And these are your American lassies," he continued, as the girls alighted and gathered around Miss Gray. "Why, they're bigger than you are yourself! They might take charge of a bit of a lassie like you."

"They often do," said Miss Gray, with a smile at the girls as she presented them to her uncle.

Uncle Duncan greeted them with a true Scotch hand-shake, and led the way to the wagonette, which was across the track, on the other side of the station. His honest face was lighted up by kindness and hospitality, but Miss Gray thought she detected a little undercurrent of sadness. She concleudd that it was some business care, —

for her uncle had many, — and being very weary herself was glad to ride on quietly to the house. As they went along the platform they were met by an elderly gentleman, who accosted Uncle Duncan. Clare, who was nearest, heard him say in subdued tone, —

"When did the change take place?"

She also caught Uncle Duncan's very softly spoken reply, —

"About two hours ago."

Everything was strange, and they were all very weary, so no one thought long upon any one subject; and nothing more was heard that night, — nothing but gentle solicitude from both Mr. and Mrs. Gray for the refreshing and repose of the travellers. It seemed as if they had come so far and must of necessity be very weary.

"The poor lassies! They have come a long way for their holiday. I hope they will not be disappointed," said kind-hearted Uncle Duncan, as he looked compassionately on the group of very sleepy, travel-worn maidens who were striving to keep awake long enough to receive courteously all the kind attentions showered upon them.

After they had taken a little supper and had worship, which Uncle Duncan considerately made shorter than usual, Aunt Jessie herself showed them to their rooms and kissed them good night. "Do not hurry in the morning," she said. "Duncan has his porridge early, and goes out to the fields or to the market; but you may just rest yourselves as long as ever you like."

This privilege was willingly availed of by all, for they

were very, very weary from the past week's travelling; and this was their first opportunity to actually sleep off their fatigue.

Miss Gray was up earlier than the girls. She wanted to talk over family news with her uncle and aunt. Down in the cosey morning-room she found a bright fire in the grate; but no one was in the room save Rob, the brown spaniel, and Polly, the green parrot.

Polly eyed the stranger with an air of disapproving gravity and refused to return any greeting. Rob looked up lazily as Miss Gray bent over to pat him, stretched himself in the direction of the fire, and went on with his nap. He was not easily roused to exertion, and was accused by energetic Uncle Duncan of sleeping his very life away. Miss Gray sat down in a low chair before the fire and began to wonder that neither uncle nor aunt seemed to be about the house. At length a maid came in to look after the fire, at which Polly found her voice and said emphatically, though irrelevantly,—

"Good morning, Mr. Gray!"

Miss Gray and the maid looked at each other and smiled, and Miss Gray asked, —

"Where are my uncle and aunt? I came down early to have a talk with them. They generally get up early, do they not?"

"Yes, miss," said the girl; "and I think Mr. Gray is in his office now. Mrs. Gray went over to 'Glengower' last evening after you and the young ladies had gone to your rooms. She stayed with her sister for the night.

It is a sad blow to them, losing the dear old lady, Mrs. Matheson."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Miss Gray. "Is Mrs. Matheson, Aunt Jessie's mother, *dead?* Why, they never said a word last evening; and yet I thought — yes, now I understand the strangely quiet way that both Aunt Jessie and Uncle Duncan had last evening. Oh! I almost feel sorry that we all came at this time."

"It was your aunt's wish that no one should speak about the death to you last evening. She said, 'The dear lassies will be so weary with coming such a way, they will need to rest. Sorrow must not be their first greeting.' And maybe, miss, I have done wrong to tell you now."

The maid looked alarmed lest her master and mistress should be displeased with her.

"Oh, no; I ought to know it. Dear Mrs. Matheson! I remember her when I was here before, — so gentle and so kind! How Aunt Jessie and her sister will miss her! She used to live here, did she not?"

"Oh, yes, miss; she has lived here these years, ever since her husband died. She was but making a visit at 'Glengower,' and the sickness came on and she was ill but a few days." Here the girl put her apron to her eyes and wept. After a moment she said brokenly, "You may well say she was gentle and kind, miss. Every creature about the place here knew her voice and will miss her sorely."

Maggie now dried her eyes hastily and started off to

her other duties, which were in a fair way to be neglected. Miss Gray stood a moment looking out of the window facing the lawn, and was lost in thought. How wonderful seemed the self-control of these relatives of hers, who could cover up their poignant grief to prevent others from feeling it and having their welcome in this place of sojourn tinged with sadness! She turned away from the window, crossed the room, and went out into the hall that led to her uncle's office. There she found him busily writing.

"Come in, dear lassie, come in," he said, drawing up a chair beside him for her.

"O Uncle Duncan, I have just heard from one of the servants of Aunt Jessie's loss. I feel as if my girls and I ought not to intrude on her just at this time. We might have planned differently if we had known the sad news. I feel so sorry for Aunt Jessie and her sister. They were like young girls with their mother, when I was here before."

"Now, my dear Jeanie, I am just very thankful that you and your lassies are come. It is just what Jessie will need — something new to think about, and you're not to grieve over a sorrow that is not your own. You need a rest after all your work in the school, and Mrs. Matheson herself has been looking forward to seeing you enjoy the drives as you did when you came to see us some years ago. The poor body! She was always fond of seeing those about her happy." And Uncle Duncan shook his head sorrowfully and said softly, "It is the Lord's will;

we must bear it as from him. Ay, ay!" With these last expressive little syllables, that discover what lies upon a Scotch heart and fall so plaintively on a stranger's ear, Uncle Duncan took up his pen to go on with his work.

"Let me help you, uncle. Are you sending out the funeral notices?"

"Yes: I brought them here to direct, for David had much to see to at 'Glengower.' He has but just returned from business in England."

So for a half-hour Miss Gray and her uncle directed the black-edged notes that were to be sent to relatives and friends of the family. There were three different styles of announcement: for those in the vicinity who could attend the services at "Glengower"; for those at a distance who could not attend, and simply notifying them of the time and place of decease; and last, for those who were to meet the burial train at the old home of Mrs. Matheson, far in the North, and assist in the last rites.

Uncle Duncan had directed one to Miss Gray's father and several to other friends in America. A few went to New Zealand and Australia, but the most were sent to various towns in the Highlands.

"Come, lassie, we must see if breakfast is not ready. You must not go hungry in Scotland," and Uncle Duncan put his arm around his niece and they went to the breakfast room. Polly recognized her master and remarked again, "Good morning, Mr. Gray! Polly's away to Fife," after which she settled into a melancholy attitude

and refused to take any further interest in the proceedings.

Maggie brought in Mr. Gray's plate of porridge, and toast and eggs for Miss Gray.

"Do you go and see if any of the young ladies are stirring, Maggie," said Mr. Gray. "It will be best for them to sleep late and get a good rest, but if they should be up we must have them with us."

Maggie returned to say that she could hear nothing from either of the rooms where the young ladies were; and so uncle and niece took their breakfast cosily together, indulging in many bits of family gossip.

"It's very warm here," said Uncle Duncan, as he dispatched the last of his porridge and milk. That fire must be kept down. Are you warm, Jeanie?"

"Dear me, no, uncle: I am almost ready to shiver. You know, it seems so much colder to us from America. You will laugh to see my girls wrap up and worship the fire. We nearly froze at Oban until I ordered fire in our rooms. The air seems so chilly to us; it is pretty far north, you see, and then we have not had much sunshine as yet."

"Is it possible?" was Uncle Duncan's reply. "Then we will keep a good fire for you, but it seems very strange that any one should feel cold in July. You must eat plenty of oatmeal to make your blood warm," he added with a little chuckle.

After breakfast Miss Gray walked with her uncle out to the "steadings" to see the cattle. The sky was dull

and lowering. There was a hush in the air as of the Sabbath. They were not near a public road, Uncle Duncan's estate being so large that it was a good quarter of a mile from the house to the entrance gate. The only buildings to be seen were those of the farm and the low

stone cottages of the coachman and other servants. They met the shepherd, who was taking his dogs up to the house for their breakfast of milk. In a turnip field were a dozen or more women at work weeding. Their dresses were short or tucked up, and they wore little

plaid shawls about their shoulders. It seemed to Miss Gray like a *Millet* study. Uncle Duncan spoke cheeringly to the girls and women, who just looked up from their work as he passed. Their faces wore a look of patient perseverance bordering on sadness. Miss Gray spoke of this, but Uncle Duncan said, —

"They'll be gay enough when the Midsummer Fair comes round. You'll see them with new ribbons and their sweethearts by their side."

Uncle Duncan's idea of gayety was a mild one, and his niece thought so; but she said nothing.

When they returned to the house they found Aunt Jessie just getting out of the phaeton which had brought her over from "Glengower." She was surprised to see Miss Gray up and out, and said, "Dear Jeanie, why did you not take your rest this morning? I thought I would get home before you were down-stairs. Are your lassies up too?"

"No, auntie dear: they are still resting, I hope. Uncle and I had breakfast together, and have been to the steadings and seen the cows and the pigs and some of the sheep. We have had a pleasant time and talk. I have told him all about father, and all the Scotch friends in America. And, dear Aunt Jessie, I know your great sorrow, and sympathize so much with you in your loss."

The two women held each other in a close embrace and mingled their tears silently. Then as they went to Aunt Jessie's room they talked tenderly of the dear

mother she had lost, and recalled many of her ways and sayings.

"Dear mother looked forward so to seeing the American lassies," said Aunt Jessie after a little silence. "We must try for her sake not to let this make their visit gloomy."

"They need a quiet rest after so much sight-seeing, and they will not want you to feel obliged to entertain them. Leave them to me, auntie, and do not think about us for the present. I will go now and see if they are up and ready for breakfast."

The girls had good appetites for breakfast, and afterwards Miss Gray got the key of the garden, and they walked through its long, straight paths and saw many new plants and some rich, velvety wall-flowers growing in the shelter of the high wall about the garden. Aunt Jessie raised fine strawberries in her garden and some dainty vegetables. While they walked together Miss Gray told the girls of the sudden death of Aunt Jessie's mother. They expressed sympathy and anxiety about being there at such a time, but Miss Gray told them what was the desire of their kind host and hostess, and explained to them that it would be better for her aunt to have them to think of. They spent a portion of the day with notebook and letters, sorting over and packing carefully their photographs and other treasures, and in going about the estate to see where the animals lived.

"The very pigs have stone houses," said Mollie in her letter to her little cousin Ralph, "and it is so still all

around us it seems as if something strange were going to happen. But it is lovely, and I like everything and everybody."

Toward the end of the afternoon Mr. Muir and two of his sisters drove over from "Kinlossie" to call on the Americans and convey their sympathy to Mrs. Gray. Their home was some miles away, and they had not known of Mrs. Matheson's death until they had received the notice that afternoon. The Misses Muir were very gentle-mannered young ladies. Miss Gray's girls were charmed with their soft, low voices, and the perfect English of their conversation. The elder sister, Meena, wore black and looked a little sad, but her sister strove to keep her from opportunity to indulge in thought, constantly directing the conversation to her. Uncle Duncan came in before the call was ended and took Meena off with him to the garden, where he gathered some strawberries for her. He laughingly told the American girls that he and Meena were great friends, and some day he should take her to America with him. She had been his "Lassie" since ever she was a wee bairnie.

When Miss Gray and her girls had promised faithfully to pay a visit to them soon, the Muirs took their leave. Uncle Duncan then explained the cause of Meena's black dress and grave face. But a few weeks before there had come news of the death of her lover in New Zealand. Meena was his affianced wife, and he had taken leave of her to go and make his fortune. It was a hard blow for her. "Poor little lass! We must keep her

spirits from drooping; she's looking a bit ill. She's a good lass — a good lass."

"But New Zealand is a long way from here, isn't it?" said Leta. "Would she have gone out there to live?"

"Yes, dear," said Aunt Jessie gently in reply to Leta's question. "Our Scotch lassies will go a long way for the man they love. It is no rare event for them to go either to America or Australia or New Zealand to be married to the laddie who has been waiting and working for them. A cousin of mine in Edinburgh left a good home to go as a bride to America a year or two ago. She was not so very young, but she was very happy, and they had been good friends for years and knew their own minds."

The phaeton from "Glengower" was driven up to the door, and a note from Aunt Jessie's sister, asking her and Jeanie to come over, was delivered by the boy who drove.

Uncle Duncan said he would have his coachman take the girls out for a little drive, so they need not miss Aunt Jessie and Miss Gray.

These two were met by Aunt Nannie as they drove up to the door of "Glengower." "I have been longing to see you," she said, embracing Miss Gray. "Dear mother — " and here the tears came in spite of her effort at self-control. After a minute she continued, "Dear mother waited so for your coming. She was so eager to see your girls, 'all the way from America,' as she used to say."

They went up to the room where the dear mother

lay. Gently the daughters touched the silent form outlined under its white covering. Reverently they turned away the covering from the beloved face, peaceful now as it had always been in life, but white with the strange pallor of death. Silently all three looked upon the dead, — the two who had known that form as "Mother," and their younger companion, who remembered, through intervening years, the gentle presence of this dear, dead woman. Then tenderly replacing the covering, as if to comfort her who lay so silent, so beyond all earthly comfort or discomfort, they reluctantly withdrew.

For a time no word was spoken. The two elder women felt the wordless sympathy of their young companion and were grateful for it, and Miss Gray herself was meditating on the lesson of such a goodly life and such a peaceful end. Thoughts like these cannot be voiced in words.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SCHOOL EXHIBITION.

THREE quiet, restful days had been passed by Miss Gray's girls. They had been rather a comfort than a care to their gentle hostess, who found that American girls have hearts quick to respond to another's sorrow. Leta's supple, slender hands had wonderful power to soothe, and Aunt Jessie's tired, throbbing head yielded to their gentle stroking. Clare's sweet look of sympathy was in itself a comfort. She had a keen remembrance of her own sense of loss when her mother had been taken from her, although she was then but a child in years. Mollie and Elizabeth made themselves useful in various ways about the house, and Aunt Jessie began to love the "American lassies," as if they had been her own. She had a mother's heart, but no child had been given her, and she freely gave her love to all young people.

One day Uncle Duncan asked his niece if she and her girls would like to attend the distribution of prizes at the Tain Royal Academy. All wished to go, if it were convenient; so Uncle Duncan, who was one of the "governors" of the academy, made preparations to attend with them.

"It will be nice to see how they do things in schools in Scotland," said Mollie; "and prizes will be something

new to us. Do any of our schools at home give prizes, Miss Gray? I never knew they did."

"I think the custom has gone almost totally out of fashion," replied Miss Gray. "The best educators do not approve of exciting pupils so much. It is a great strain on some pupils, and often causes bitter disappointment. I shall be very much interested to see the pupils getting their prizes. I want to see if they look tired and nervous."

Uncle Duncan listened attentively and then said, "I believe you are quite right about it, Jeanie. I have known some lads, who strove for prizes but lost them, to become sick; and one poor lad died of a brain fever. But they do not often take it so to heart; there must be a little weakness to begin with. Moreover, our Tain lads stand well at the universities and take many honors. There was a lad took the Murray Bursary this year and two of them last year."

The exercises at the academy were very interesting to the Americans. They found the primary rooms so well attended that it was next to impossible to get inside the doors. They went into the rooms in which were placed for inspection the drawing and painting, penmanship, map-drawing, and needle-work, both plain and fancy. Some of this last-named work was beautifully done, and of quite a foreign aspect. After seeing this and listening at some of the doors, the party went over to the public hall, where at one o'clock were to take place recitations, vocal and instrumental music, and the

distribution of prizes. It seemed quite homelike when several of the boys and girls recited extracts from well-known American poets. The prize distribution proved most interesting. The brilliant eyes and rosy cheeks of the recipients showed that the occasion was to them an exciting one. Elizabeth longed for her pencil and sketch-book.

"Just look at that child!" she whispered to Mollie, as a girl of some ten or eleven years went up to receive her volume of poems. The child was beautiful to look upon. She had soft, fair hair curling back over her shoulders, and fine brown eyes that shone like stars. Her cheeks were like damask roses; excitement had given them more than their usual blush. A dainty little gown of apple-green was a most appropriate tint to harmonize with hair and cheeks. A great hat with drooping white plumes was placed carelessly upon the sunny hair. It was a delicious portrait to remember.

As they rode homeward the girls were busy asking questions about various pupils whom they had noticed particularly. Uncle Duncan enjoyed telling them about the boys and girls, and hearing what his young guests had to say about the exercises.

After lunch Elizabeth sat down to draw from memory the head of the beautiful child, whom she so much admired at the school exhibition.

Leta worked diligently at the notebook, anxious to have it tell a complete story of their days in the Scottish Highlands.

Clare was busy putting some "gowans," which she had gathered on the lawn, into a book to press. They were all in the little morning-room on account of the grate fire. Mollie stood near Polly's cage trying to induce that feathered biped to repeat her latest remark, eulogistic of Mr. Gladstone, of whom the household of "Birkie House" held high opinions.

Some ten minutes before Madame Polly had turned her head oracularly from side to side and ejaculated in solemn tone, —

"Good morning! — Grand old man!"

But not another word could she be induced to utter on this subject or any other.

Miss Gray was lying on the sofa, resting, and enjoying the fire and the chatter of the girls at their various occupations. Aunt Jessie had gone with one of her maids into the garden to attend to some vines that needed tying up.

Presently Uncle Duncan was heard coming through the hall. Hearing voices in the morning-room, he came

thither and stood beside the workers, gazing with interest at their busy pencils and fingers.

"You're very clever lassies — very clever lassies," he remarked. "I never saw more industrious young ladies — never idle; if it's not sight-seeing it's writing about the sights you have seen, or reading about those you hope to see, or writing a letter, or putting down your accounts, or what not. You must get a great deal accomplished in the course of the year. Are they always this industrious, Jeanie?"

"Yes: I think I can truly say they are busy bees and 'improve each shining hour,'" replied Miss Gray from her sofa.

"We learn to be so from Miss Gray," said Mollie. "Nobody can help falling into her ways after being under her influence. Mamma is always telling me to be sure and follow Miss Gray's example, and try to economize my time and strength as she does——"

"There, Mollie, it's time to stop your flow of eloquence. I shall be getting vain; I fear I have already become so. You must look for some of my weak points to balance your views and see me as I am. You see for yourself at the present moment how idle I am, wasting my time lying here while the rest are busy."

"She works hard enough in school time to need rest now. You ought to see her, Mr. Gray."

Mollie would not allow Miss Gray to blame herself for resting, and Uncle Duncan was delighted to hear her defence of his niece, whom he himself considered worthy

of all praise. He now announced the object of his present errand to the house. He was going on business to a bit of a village several miles distant, and would like to take the lassies with him. They flew to get on hats and ulsters. Miss Gray said she would rather stay in the warm room on her sofa and have a good talk with Aunt Jessie. She waved her hand from the window as the wagonette rolled away from the door.

It was a dull afternoon, but the girls did not mind it as they did at first. They were accustomed now to ulsters and umbrellas wherever they went, and felt quite safe in the open wagonette. They rode on away from the town and came down toward the seashore, where was a forlorn collection of untidy little houses, the homes of fisher folk.

Uncle Duncan wished to see about engaging some of these people to work at his fishing station farther north. The girls thought it would be pleasant to go down on to the beach and watch the water. They walked about for a time, looking at the fishing-boats, and the

queer, straggling houses. Then they sat down on some of the large rocks, and Clare shook out some bits of seaweed to take with her. The appearance of the people and their habitations suggested —

"Three fishers went sailing out into the west";

and the mournful words and music soon floated on the briny air.

Such liberties on the part of visitors were evidently received in no kindly spirit by the urchins, who issued from their previous concealment, and began to hurl pebbles in the direction of the American mermaids. The girls braved it out, and shortly after Uncle Duncan appeared at the upper edge of the beach and beckoned them to join him. He had sent the wagonette on to meet them as they made a cross-cut over the dunes on foot. By thus doing they got warm after their sea breeze, and had an extended view. They plucked some pretty bluebells as they walked. The western sky became glorious with sunset light as they drove homeward. It was an unexpected change from the previous dull atmosphere, and all hoped that it foretold a sunshiny morrow.

Upon reaching "Birkie House" they found, much to their delight, home letters, the first they had yet received, although a cablegram from Mr. Brewster had awaited their arrival the evening they had first come to Uncle Duncan's. It merely said, "All well at home," and was intended to welcome them. The letters were all cheer-

ful, and contained good reports of the dear ones left behind. The girls were missed, but their letters were being waited for with eagerness; and it was the desire of all at home that they should enjoy to the full their summer tour.

"I hope you are all doing your duty by the note-book," wrote Mr. Barrows. "I have numerous requests for copies, and believe we shall have to make our 'first edition' a large one. Write it as well as you can, daughter, and put your friends on their mettle."

"Papa does not know how faithful we have all been," said Leta, as she read this aloud to the others.

Miss Gray had received several letters, among them one from some relatives who lived in Sutherlandshire, where her father had been born, and lived as a boy. She read the letter to her uncle and aunt and asked their advice about it. It contained a quaintly hospitable invitation for their "dear cousin" to pay them a visit at their home, the same where her father had been born and where his father had died. The letter went on to say: "Though our home is but a humble one, we are longing very much to have you come our length ere you return to America. Any of your friends will be welcome with you."

"I suppose I really ought to go," said Miss Gray, looking to Uncle Duncan for his opinion, "though I cannot of course take all the girls. The house is small, is it not?"

"Oh, you will have to go, to be sure. It will not do

to refuse a Highland offer of hospitality. You can take one of the lassies to show your Sutherland friends and the rest can stay with me. We'll give them good care. Write your cousin Wilhelmina that you will come for a day or two. You should stay a month to satisfy a Highland hostess, but you Americans do everything by method, and that you must explain when you get there." Uncle Duncan chuckled over his mental vision of Americans as he knew them.

"How shall I decide which girl to take?" asked Miss Gray.

"How will you decide which ones to leave behind? you mean, don't you, Miss Gray?" asked Mollie mischievously.

"It is a difficult problem either way," Miss Gray replied.

"But we can wait to decide it, can we not?" asked Clare.

"To be sure," said Uncle Duncan. "We will not talk about it this evening. Who is going to have a glass of milk and a bit of oatcake with me? Here comes Maggie with the tray."

"Now tell us about your drive," said Aunt Jessie. "Where did Duncan take you?"

The girls gave a vivid account of their reception by the fisher children, and the quaint, low houses and generally forlorn appearance of the village.

"All that will go down in the notebook, I suppose," said Uncle Duncan, who had listened with his usual good-

humored air of attention. "These Scotch folk better be on their guard.

> 'A chiel's amang you taking notes,
> And, faith, he'll prent it.'"

"Well, we shall only have beautiful things to say about the Scotch people. Those children at the fishing village thought we were mermaids, or something that would hurt them. That is the reason they threw stones at us — poor little fellows! I think the little Scotch boys and girls are very polite as a rule."

Mollie stood holding Aunt Jessie's hand preliminary to saying good night, for it was after eleven and the others were already on their way up-stairs. Aunt Jessie looked wistfully into the clear young eyes and thought how much comfort a mother must find in the companionship of such a daughter.

"Good night, dear lassie; sleep well," she said softly, and watched Mollie go through the hall and up the stairs.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A HIGHLAND CASTLE.

The next morning was bright and clear, and Uncle Duncan had planned to take his guests to visit Balnagown Castle, a fine old Highland estate some five miles away. After an early lunch the party set out, Uncle Duncan himself driving the pair of sleek, stout horses, which, as is customary in the Highlands, he always spoke of as "the ponies." Highland roads are beautifully smooth and hard, and the wagonette rolled on after the sure-stepping ponies in fine style. Mollie and Leta were much pleased at the shapely piles of broken stone which were placed here and there by the roadside. Uncle Duncan told them how the people in that vicinity paid their road tax, and that these stones were kept in readiness to spread upon any weak places in the roads. Leta said she should explain it to her father, who was a selectman in her home village, and tell him what perfect roads they had in the Scotch Highlands. As they rode along the air was sweet with the perfume of wild flowers. There were hedges of flowering honeysuckle, and along the wayside brooks, or "burns," were other hedges of sweetbrier or whin-bushes. The latter bear yellow flowers of "butterfly" shape, and the seeds are little

brown beans in soft greenish pods, which grow dark-colored and split open like pea-pods when ripe.

"Does the broom grow about here?" asked Clare.

"Yes; there is some. It is a finer plant than the whin or gorse. Do you see that clump just across the wall, with smaller flowers and more delicate foliage?" asked Miss Gray; while Uncle Duncan checked the course of the ponies long enough for a passing lesson in botany.

"There is plenty of both around 'Birkie House'; you can compare the two. We are none too fond of the whin-bushes. You may take a load of them to America with you and nobody will cry," he said as he started up the horses, and they rolled on again.

"Oh, those superb foxgloves!" exclaimed Elizabeth, as they passed a wayside nook where the great tall purple-red spikes stood proudly erect.

"No wonder Walter Scott speaks often of the fox-glove in his poems; they are magnificent," said Miss Gray.

Uncle Duncan now pointed out a long line of dilapidated hedge, where he said the rabbits had been eating out the roots.

"We are likely to see one of the little trespassers," he said, looking ahead of the horses.

Sure enough, one of the dirty-gray little rodents darted across the road just in front of the carriage and whisked himself out of sight.

"Naughty bunnie, to spoil the hedges!" said Mollie,

shaking her finger at the big-eyed, timid creature, who paused an instant to gaze at the party before he disappeared from view.

Before long they drove up to the pretty stone lodge of Balnagown, where they were met by the lodge-keeper and her little ones. Permission to drive into the grounds was soon obtained, as Lady Ross and her family were

not at the castle. Uncle Duncan was well known to the workpeople all about his vicinity. He employed a good many men and women in his fishing industries, and also about the estate at "Birkie House." The lodge-keeper was very anxious to please him, and sent one of her little girls to show him the best way to drive to the stables, where he could leave the ponies and carriage

while the party was being shown about the castle. The grounds and avenues at Balnagown are finely kept. There are many magnificent old trees, and, as they caught a glimpse of the front of the castle, delighted exclamations over its rich mantle of ivy broke from the girls.

"Are you sure we can go through this lovely building?" asked Clare. "It seems too good to be true; doesn't it, girls?"

"Almost," said Mollie, in an ecstasy of anticipation; "but people seem to let us do everything here."

By this time they had left the wagonette and were walking toward the castle, discussing its architecture and wondering about its history. Uncle Duncan told them a little romance about its present owner, and how she came to be the Lady of Balnagown. As he concluded, he shook his head and said, with an air of conviction, "She was a lucky woman — a lucky woman!"

To become an owner of houses and lands is the *summum bonum* of earthly bliss in a Scotchman's mind.

As nobody was to be found about the main entrance, they walked around to the back of the building, where the grounds were much wilder and the trees like a forest. A bell hung from an iron support on the wall, ready to summon workmen, or aid, if needed by the occupants. Uncle Duncan at length succeeded in finding a good-natured laundry maid, who was delighted to earn a fee and show the "leddies" through the mansion. They began with the kitchen, where they saw some huge and

ancient arrangements for cooking meats. There were great stationary gridirons and boilers, and nothing looked as if ready to furnish dainty fare. But as the establishment was being prepared for the return of the mistress, it was probable that none of the domestic machinery was quite in running order. The dining-room was more suggestive of the festive board. There was an immense grate ready for lighting fire, and containing several barrels of coal. In front were tall brass andirons, and above, a mantel of massive oak. The maid showed them the rolled-up rugs and hangings that would be put in place as the finishing touch. Elizabeth had tucked a small block of sketching paper into her ulster pocket, and she managed to seize a few minutes to sketch one of the andirons, with its grotesque finish.

"I wish," sighed Mollie, "that 'my lady' would invite us here to a dinner party, so we could see the firelight, and the candles, and those lovely crimson curtains."

"'Tis a fine sight, miss," said the listening maid, "and often can be seen when my lady has guests. It's a different place then."

From the library windows there was a good view of the rear grounds. The books on the shelves seemed to be mostly in the line of law and genealogy. They did not look interesting. The drawing-room was a long room with windows at both ends. It held many portraits, cabinets, and screens, and indicated a taste for art. In the billiard room stood a pipe organ. There were many sitting-rooms or boudoirs. In these stood easels with

paintings, some not yet completed. There were much fine china and Egyptian bric-a-brac. There were couches innumerable, with downy cushions, and several pianos, some grand and some upright. There was "enough to go round," as Mollie stated it, "and some left over." Old armor abounded. Swords, daggers, shields, axes, and all sorts of weapons were disposed as ornaments in various places. The maid showed several portraits, none of them large, of the mistress of the mansion and her young son.

"It makes me think just a little of Little Lord Fauntleroy," said Clare; "only I do not believe such a mother and son could exist anywhere but in our country."

The castle contains a large number of bedrooms and accompanying dressing-rooms, of which so much is said in English stories. In one of the guest chambers the girls admired the frieze which adorned the walls. It was wide and of a soft pearl color, and represented bands of cherubs dancing in an endless line. The beds were all provided with canopies. In a bathroom the maid pointed out a white marble bathtub. This was a bit of luxury which was almost unique. The air of the house furnishings in general was of antiquity rather than modern splendor. Many pieces of furniture were even shabby. This delighted the girls, because it seemed so much more like the actual ancestral castle. The furnishings and decorations had been accumulated by successive generations, and gained thus in interest.

Before going down to the ground floor the girls

each stepped into a tiny room in one of the towers, where from a narrow window there was a view over the front avenue and lawns. Near the handsome square entrance hall, with its arched recess and large oriental vases, were the aviary and conservatory. The birds and the tropical plants alike looked somewhat weary of their life. All about the walls of the hall were ranged glass cases containing stuffed animals. Higher up on the walls were placed skulls and horns, trophies of the chase. Here was another large fireplace. There is doubtless need of all the warmth and cheer that can be brought to bear upon the rooms of the great stone edifice. The girls thought her ladyship did well to always keep her mansion supplied with guests. It certainly might be drearily dull in such a great home, shut in by its acres of trees from the outside world. Some workmen were repairing one of the towers and had disturbed the beautiful ivy, so that many glossy leaves, and even pieces of the vine, lay upon the walk below.

"This way for the souvenirs, ladies!" called Mollie, who had gone ahead of the rest and was picking up some immense leaves. Miss Gray fastened a pretty spray, which Elizabeth handed her, upon her walking-hat.

Mollie and Clare were wondering if they should be able to procure any photographs of Balnagown.

"We just *must* have some kind of a view after seeing it so thoroughly," was Mollie's decision.

Uncle Duncan thought there would be no difficulty in getting what they desired at the stationer's in Tain.

As they drove out of the grounds many glances were cast back at the ivy-clad mansion, and Leta agreed to help Mollie recall everything for the notebook. They had promised to call for Aunt Jessie at "Glengower," and to take tea before continuing their drive home. During the evening Aunt Nannie and Uncle David obtained a promise that a portion of Miss Gray's party at least should come for a few days to "Glengower."

A young cousin of Miss Gray, a brother of their kind Glasgow hostess, Mrs. Wales, was staying for a fortnight at "Glengower." The girls were much pleased with his conversation, which was serious beyond his years. His manners were gravely courteous, and he listened to their plans for travel with deferential interest. He was a clerk in an Edinburgh music store, and offered his services as guide when his cousin and her companions should come to that city. Elizabeth, who always liked to add to her repertory of songs, asked him to select for her a book of the best Scotch ballads. Mollie and Leta

solicited his escort for a climb to the summit of Arthur's Seat.

Miss Gray said she wanted to see the famous Forth Bridge, and Cousin Hugh gravely offered to be her escort.

"What are you going to get Mr. Bell to do for you, Clare?" asked Mollie. "We have all made our wants known but you."

"I want to see the Scott monument, and I want to go into some of the strange old alleyways that are called 'closes.' I have seen some pictures of them, and they are so quaint."

"We must all see those," said Miss Gray; "they are fascinating."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SCOTCH KIRK.

On Sunday, Uncle Duncan took the four girls to church. Aunt Jessie and Miss Gray remained at home, as both felt the need of rest. The service did not begin until half past one, this being the English service, which is usually preceded by the Gaelic. They caught glimpses of the old Highland men and women just leaving the church for home. A few remained for the English service.

The American girls, accustomed to comparatively short sermons and church services, thought such power of concentration rather remarkable. The church itself was severely simple, and there was no luxuriousness about the pews, which had narrow seats and low, straight backs. A great many of the worshippers wore mourning, and this was most noticeable in the case of rosy-cheeked children. The same white-haired minister who had been at the railway station when Miss Gray's party arrived occupied the pulpit. He spoke to his hearers of the approaching "Sacrament Days." The Holy Communion is celebrated but twice a year in the Highlands of Scotland, — at midsummer and midwinter. Several days of preparation are observed with much solemnity.

It was near the end of the afternoon when the church party reached home.

"And how did you like the Scotch kirk, lassies?" inquired Aunt Jessie as they sat around the dinner table. "It was not much like your American churches, I suppose."

Uncle Duncan laughed, and said, "This lassie," pointing to Mollie, "says the seats are too hard."

"Now, Mr. Gray, I did not really say that: *you* said it, you know. They were rather narrow, and I could not sit very still; but I was glad enough to sit down on them again after standing through that long prayer. And that dear old minister had a beautiful sermon. I think I like kirk very well indeed."

"Clare and I sat up in the gallery with Uncle David; he was all alone and invited us," said Elizabeth. "We had a fine opportunity to see everybody and everything. One of those quaint little Gaelic women, with a white cap on, came in and brought her little wooden stool with her. She found a place for it just at the entrance to some one's pew, and sat herself down as calmly as if she had been at home. I confess I was wicked enough to wish for my sketchbook and pencil, or, better yet, a Kodak. And Clare was just as naughty. She whispered to me how much she would like an instantaneous view of the shepherd, who came striding in with his plaid around his shoulders and his two collies beside him."

"Those dear, sweet doggies!" said Clare. "They behaved just as well as anybody."

"Oh," said Uncle Duncan, "Scotch dogs are brought up to attend kirk, and they would never disgrace them-

selves or their masters. I suppose in America the dogs never go to church, eh? They must be a bad lot."

"I saw you talking with Mr. Muir and his sisters after we came out of church," said Leta. "I wonder

how Bran is since he got home. He does not go to church, does he?"

"No: it's generally the collies who go to kirk. What do you suppose Mr. Muir was talking about?"

"The sermon, of course, Uncle Duncan," said Miss Gray, with a gleam of mischief in her eyes. "You remember the story of the pious elder who rebuked the poor young man who ventured to remark on the loveliness of a certain Sabbath day? 'Young man,' said he, 'is this a day to be talking of *days?*'"

Uncle Duncan laughed long and loud over this anecdote.

"He was a poor, narrow body, that elder," said he.

Uncle Duncan himself had been early associated with many of the same severe type of religionists, but he had developed a broad physique and a corresponding breadth of judgment and sympathy.

"Well, Duncan, man, what *was* Gordon Muir saying to you?" asked Aunt Jessie. "I always want a word from 'Gordie,' as he used to call himself when he was a wee laddie."

"First he made inquiries about you, and very kind ones too."

"And next?"

"Next, he and Meena and Agnes are wanting to meet with us when we go to Cromarty and take us to 'Kinlossie' on the return."

"I am so glad we shall get to Cromarty. I always remembered the idyllic day we spent there when I was here before," observed Miss Gray, when a little lull had succeeded the chatter of the girls about the Cromarty trip, and the pleasure of spending the evening at the home of the Muirs.

"The Muirs did not live here then, did they?" she added.

"No: they only came here from Wick three years ago," replied Aunt Jessie. "They are a dear family, and some of our oldest friends. I am glad you will know them, and see them in their home. Now I want my little treat of music from these dear lassies. Let us go to the drawing-room."

CHAPTER XX.

MAKING NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

THE next day began with mist, which settled into rain during the forenoon. Later in the day the rain ceased, but the sky did not lose its threatening look. After breakfast, while Aunt Jessie was busy with her maids, Miss Gray and her girls brought their work into the morning-room, where Rob and Pollie seemed glad to see them. Rob stretched himself close beside Miss Gray, and cuddled his nose in her dress. Pollie hopped about in her cage and made various demonstrations to show that she considered them her guests as well as Rob's.

"Good morning, Mr. Gray! Did you get —?"

Pollie never had been known to finish this sentence, whether from inability or obstinacy could not be discovered. What she intended to say was supposed to be "Did you get your tea?" The girls had each tried to induce her to finish this incomplete query, but with no success.

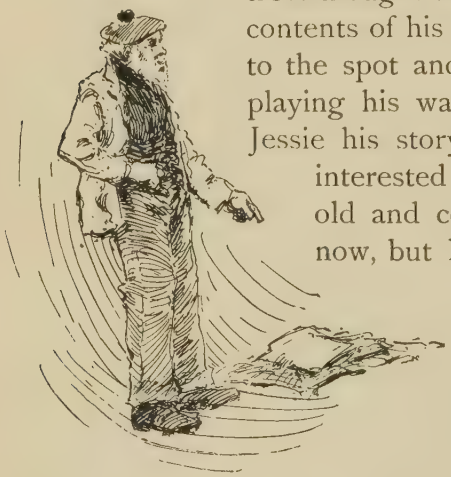
"Did you get —?" croaked Pollie.

"*Your tea?*" one after another would say in wheedling tones. "Good Pollie, say, 'Did you get *your tea?*'"

Pollie was silent as a sphinx. The girls gave it up for a while and chattered among themselves without regard to Pollie.

"Good morning! Grand old man! Good morning! Good morning! Did you get —?" And then, as if in derision, followed harsh shrieks resembling laughter; but the question was never made clear.

"Pollie would figure well in a ghost story, if she only talked at night," said Mollie, after they had all screamed at Pollie to be quiet. Maggie came to the door to tell them that an old pedler was in the kitchen and her mistress thought they might like to see the contents of his pack. They all hastened to the spot and found the old man displaying his wares. He had told Aunt Jessie his story previously, and she felt interested in him. He was quite old and could not do much work now, but he had seen lively events in his time. He had been an officer's servant, and his last master had left him a small pension, but not enough to support him. So in summer he wandered about the country and sold to charitable ladies his little stock. In winter he was unable to get about, and lived with a grandchild, who was kind to him. As he talked and told the prices of his goods, Elizabeth stole out for her sketchbook, and stood in a doorway while she made a sketch of the scene in the kitchen. Miss Gray bought several of his fancy aprons for Maggie and the



other maids, and each of the girls purchased something. The old man's face wore a happier look as he counted the shillings into his little leather pouch. He made a very polite bow, which suggested the bygone gallant, and shouldered his pack for a new start.

Mollie and Elizabeth decided to walk to the village, as the rain was not heavy. They were anxious to visit the shops and see what photographs of the vicinity could be found. After they had gone, Clare and Leta, who had watched them down the avenue, concluded to take a walk to a certain pretty bit of road that they had passed in one of their drives.

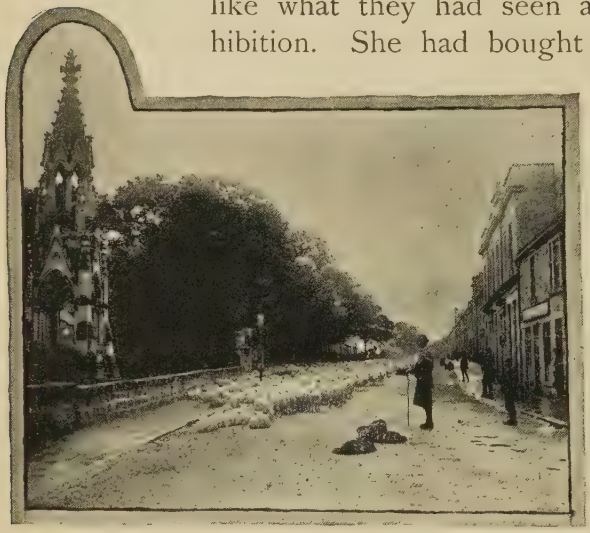
Miss Gray and Aunt Jessie, whose household cares were now disposed of for the morning, had a cosey chat before the fire. They were interrupted by the sound of horse's hoofs upon the avenue, and looked out to see Mr. Muir riding up to the door on his colt, followed by Bran, rather draggled from his long run over the wet roads.

Aunt Jessie was soon at the door begging her favorite Gordon to come in. Miss Gray tapped on the window, and Bran made haste to present himself, with his great paws planted on the stone sill.

Mr. Muir had come to talk over the Cromarty trip, and, when he learned that the young ladies were not at home, decided to ride round to the stable and leave his horse, and give Bran a bit of a rubbing to make him more presentable.

"You're to stay to lunch with us, Gordon, lad," called Aunt Jessie after him.

The girls returned quite exultant from their walks. The two photograph hunters had discovered some very good views of Balnagown Castle and a street scene in Tain, showing a market day,—a great flock of sheep attended by the shepherd and collies. Elizabeth had visited a fancy-goods shop and found some pretty work like what they had seen at the school exhibition. She had bought some odd little doilies, and floss to embroider them. She reported having seen a pretty five-o'clock-tea cloth, which the girls thought would be just the thing to get for Miss Gray to use in her room at school. They would all help on the work, and it would be a fine souvenir of Tain and their sojourn there. Mr. Muir was amused as much as formerly to hear their incessant plans for work to be accomplished. Leta and Clare had soon followed the other two, and they also had trophies to exhibit. They had found some very beautiful wild fringed orchids with an exquisite fragrance. All admired them as Clare's



deft fingers arranged them in a crystal vase and placed them on the lunch table. Uncle Duncan, who had driven away early that morning on business, was heard speaking to one of the servants in the kitchen, and so the lunch party was now complete. Plans were made to start next morning for Cromarty, should the weather permit. Mr. Muir presented his mother's invitation for the party to take tea at "Kinlossie," and shortly after lunch he and Bran took leave of their entertainers; and with many hopes for a fair to-morrow the girls watched them out of sight.

Aunt Jessie had promised to take her guests to a quiet tea at one of their nearest neighbors. About four o'clock they set out to walk across the fields to the house. A path along the edge of a field of rich red clover led from the grounds of "Birkie House," and over a slight rise of land, almost into the dooryard of the pretty stone house, where their expectant hostess and her daughter sat by a window. In front of the house they paused at Mollie's exclamation, —

"O girls, there's one of those funny trees!"

"Oh, so there is, — a monkey-puzzle. Perhaps Mrs. Stuart can tell us about its native country," said Miss Gray.

Mrs. Stuart and Janet, followed by Mrs. Stuart's pretty niece from Thurso, had come to the door to welcome their visitors. They all came down the steps, across the gravelled walk, and greeted Aunt Jessie and her friends most cordially. But of the *habitat* of the curious tree they had nothing to tell.

"And is it the monkey-puzzle that your young friends are wishing to know about?" asked Mrs. Stuart of Aunt Jessie, in her sweetly dignified Scotch way. "Dear me, I cannot tell them a word about the botany of the queer, straight monstrosity. As you know, we have lived here but three years, and the tree was here when we took this place. I tell Mr. Stuart I wish those who planted it had been blessed with better taste, but he laughs at me and lets it stand where it is. But come; you must rest after your walk. Let us go in."

There were roses climbing over the doorway, and pots of ferns stood just inside. In the pretty sitting-room a very pleasant hour was passed before tea was announced. Janet and her cousin had fancy work to show the American girls, and were eager to hear about the handiwork that was most in vogue among their countrywomen. Miss Gray's girls were fascinated by this cousin. She was like the girls described in novels, as Mollie afterwards declared. Her complexion was like a wild rose, so exquisite was the color that glowed on the velvety cheeks. Her eyes and hair were dark, and she opened her mouth to say the wisest things in a serene little way that was charming to see.

The girls had become so accustomed to Scotch dainties that it seemed as if they had never taken tea in their lives without scones, and oatcake, and marmalade. They did justice to all Mrs. Stuart's good things, and were especially complimentary with regard to the rich and

crumbling shortcake which was kept carefully in a beautiful china biscuit jar.

When they had adjourned to the sitting-room they saw Uncle Duncan driving up to the door in the wagonette. He was urged to come in, and did so for a half-hour's chat with Mr. Stuart, who had just come in and was taking his tea alone, being waited on by his devoted wife, who had excused herself for this service.

As the "Birkie House" party reached home they found letters placed on the table in their favorite gathering-place, the morning-room. Leta had one from her Cousin Phil, describing his trip up the Rhine. Mr. Thayer enclosed a few lines and several "blue prints," which he had taken in the vicinity of Bingen. Both boys were in good spirits and enjoying Europe as only boys can enjoy. They reported great progress in their German, and sent best wishes to Miss Gray and party for an equally delightful summer. They hinted that they still regretted not being able to go to Scotland, and rather envied Leta and her friends.

Cousin Hugh called during the evening "to give them good by," as he quaintly worded it. They had another talk about Edinburgh, and made more plans for seeing its sights. Cousin Hugh also told them of his home at Peterhead, on the most easterly coast of Scotland, where the famous stone called in America "Scotch granite" is quarried. He was a very well-informed young man, and the American girls were glad to receive such

sensible and lucid replies to their own clearly-put questions.

Uncle Duncan sat reading his newspaper, but occasionally indulged in a smile as he heard the conversation. "They're clever lassies, yon," he said to Aunt Jessie.

CHAPTER XXI.

CROMARTY FIRTH AND "KINLOSSIE."

THE morning drive to the shores of Cromarty Firth was full of interest. The wayside flowers, refreshed by the recent rain, called forth many exclamations from the girls. The fine ornamental trees on the estates passed by had their attractions. There were many purple beeches among the masses of green foliage. On some of the farms the girls counted twenty or more of the great yellow stacks of wheat, which the farmers were keeping over, hoping to get a better price for it. Here and there was seen a prim little kirk standing alone and unshaded by any trees. Pretty stone buildings, combining the schoolmaster's home and the schoolrooms, made the girls desire to visit them and see the children at work. As they drove through the town of Nigg they saw such a quaint graveyard by the roadside that the girls begged Uncle Duncan to let them tarry a few minutes to visit it and read some of the inscriptions. Clare found some gowans, and put them carefully away for a remembrance of this little "God's acre," so quietly situated in this remote place.

After a time the road led down to the shore of Cromarty Firth, and past some fishermen's cots, with boats rolled over on their sides, and nets disposed pictur-

esquely about. The tide was low, and a vessel, which Uncle Duncan said was loaded with coal, appeared to stand upright in the mud. Carts were being driven alongside to carry the coal to the estates in the vicinity. Coal is a luxury in this region.

The road turns and runs out toward the mouth of the Firth, and shortly after the long, low white building bearing on its front in black letters, —

"Ferry Inn,"

comes into view. On the opposite shore is Cromarty, the birthplace of Hugh Miller, the famous geologist.

Uncle Duncan drove up to the door of the inn, and assisted his party to alight. A lassie appeared and invited them to come in and rest in the little parlor, with its curious pictures and woollen fancy-work. She told them the "ponies and the trap" could be taken care of at the stable, and Uncle Duncan went with the boy to see that everything was right.

Aunt Jessie and Miss Gray waited to walk with him, but the girls were eager to reach the beach, and so went on ahead. They had their basket filled with seaweed, and shells, and pebbles, by the time the elders had come leisurely down. Uncle Duncan was hungry, and announced that they would have lunch as soon as the basket could be opened. He went on a little to call back the girls, declaring that they must be hungry. They came almost reluctantly, so charming was the beach, with its outlook toward the mouth of the Firth, whose rocky barriers are known as the "Sutors of Cromarty." The

delicious sandwiches which Aunt Jessie had rolled carefully in white paper tasted very good, however, and so did the oatcake and milk, which Uncle Duncan had had brought because the lassies were so fond of them. As they sat amid the tall spikes of sand grass and disposed of their lunch, they feasted their eyes on the scenes about them. In front was a "heather hill," and far up on its purple-brown side they could see a small house, which Uncle

Duncan told them was a gamekeeper's cottage. Mollie wanted to be off immediately to visit this fascinating object, but gave it up when she realized that it was much farther away than it looked.

While all were still looking off toward the hillside a sudden rush behind them sent the sand of the kind of dune upon which they had encamped flying in all directions. They turned in surprise and beheld Bran, who jumped from one to another with signs of happiness too

great to be controlled. Coming down the path from the inn were Mr. Muir and his sisters, who had driven over according to agreement to take the Gray party home with them for tea. The Muirs had taken lunch before leaving home, so the fragments of Aunt Jessie's lunch were placed in the basket, and everybody was ready to set out for the cliffs, where Hugh Miller had made some of his earliest investigations. After walking some distance along the beach, Uncle Duncan and Mr. Muir led the way to a narrow path skirting the side of the precipice rising high and abrupt upon the shore of the Firth. Miss Gray and Aunt Jessie found a good place to sit and await the return of the geologists, and Miss Meena Muir concluded to remain with them, as she had made numerous excursions to the cliffs on previous occasions. Elizabeth was about to urge her to come, but, noting the dreamy look of sadness that had settled upon Meena's face as she spoke of previous visits, thought a quiet chat with Aunt Jessie and Miss Gray would be less hard than striving to be cheerful with strangers, while all the time —

"an unseen presence filled the air."

So they left the "Resting Club," as Mollie styled them, comfortably seated on shawls and rugs, and began the slow process of following the path, which wound its way onward and upward toward the beetling crags of Old Red Sandstone. Mr. Muir was provided with a hammer in order to procure specimens, as each of the girls desired a souvenir. Mollie and Leta, with true loyalty to their

alma mater, hoped to be able to carry home a fine piece of rock, to be deposited in the cabinet of the Wellington. Miss Gray had promised to see that it was properly labelled, and placed in a conspicuous position. All about their pathway grew beautiful recumbent wild flowers. The purple flowerets of the wild thyme made a perfumed carpet here and there. Clare had gathered masses of it and stowed them into the treasure-basket, now almost refusing to hold another relic.

Mollie paused in despair, and, looking from one point to another of their delightful surroundings, gave a little groan and said: —

"O girls! don't you want to just take the whole of it away with you? How *can* we leave it?—Mr. Gray, where can we get some views of Cromarty Firth? I did not see any in the shops at Tain."

Mr. Muir said he thought they could be had at the village across the Firth, where Hugh Miller's house was exhibited to visitors, and where there was a monument to the great man. He promised to see that they had some views before their visit was ended, and Mollie grew cheerful once more.

They all took a farewell look before leaving the crags to return by the path, and the American girls expressed the hope that Cromarty Firth should be one of the clearest memory pictures of all they had seen thus far.

While they waited at the inn for their "traps" to be made ready, the landlady's daughter brought out field-glasses and showed them Hugh Miller's monument just

across the Firth. After their hard climbing the ride to "Kinlossie" was a pleasant change, and the ponies all stepped briskly after their rest. They drove through a long avenue after entering the gate, and came up to the house before the girls knew where they were. It was a beautiful home. The house was built of stone of a soft cream color, and over the portico grew a tropœolum filled with scarlet flowers. In the niches formed by the projecting windows stood delicate ferns, while over the windows climbed ivy, with its rich green, and rosebushes in bloom. The fence about the garden was covered with honeysuckle, which filled the air with the fragrance of its blossoms.

Mrs. Muir, a refined-looking lady with a gentle voice, came to the open door to meet her guests, giving each a personal welcome. She feared they must all be weary after their day at the rocks, and bade her daughters take them up-stairs, that they might rest before tea.

All about the rooms stood beautiful pot-plants, many with bright flowers. Mrs. Muir took Aunt Jessie to her own sitting-room, that they might have a quiet talk together. A little bathing of faces and hands, together with smoothing of locks, made all the outing party fresh and energetic again.

When they went down to the drawing-room they found Uncle Duncan just coming in with his friend, their host, whom he presented to his niece and her lassies, telling him that these lassies were a wise lot, and he would do well to be on his best behavior before them.

"For," said Uncle Duncan, with a chuckle, "they keep a big book among them, and in it they put down all the mistakes and follies of us poor Scotch bodies."

"No, no," said Aunt Jessie; "they are very dear lassies, Mr. Muir; and Duncan is only teasing them. He likes to hear them defend themselves — that's all."

Mr. Muir, senior, was a Free Church elder, a man much esteemed for his practical knowledge of affairs as well as for his integrity of character. The habitual cast of his countenance while in repose bordered on severity, but there was a ready twinkle in the stern blue eyes, which showed his keen appreciation of a good thing. He was determined to draw out the American girls and see for himself if they were really as intelligent as Mr. Gray had represented them. So during tea-time the girls had opportunity to display their knowledge on various subjects introduced by their new host. They had become accustomed to Uncle Duncan's chaffing, and were not much disturbed by Mr. Muir's way of bringing them into discussion. Clare was sitting next to Gordon, and had been asking him about Bran's supper, and if he ate it with the collies. Then they recalled the day on which she had made Bran's acquaintance, and spoke of his evident regret for his rudeness and his subsequent model conduct.

Their host overheard Clare's words regarding Bran's intelligence, and saw her look of conviction. It was too good an opportunity for him to lose. He must see if this earnest little lady could hold her own in an argument.

"Come, now, Miss Brewster," said he, looking at Clare with his most penetrating expression; "you cannot be in earnest in what you are saying. A dog is a mere brute, and though he is cunning enough to get his ends served, he has no reason, he has no power of thought. It is an absurdity, quite an absurdity, to talk of Bran, the big, clumsy beast, as trying to make amends for his conduct. Gordon told us of his dog's stupidity, and, to tell the truth, I do not think Gordon regretted the occurrence as much as he might be expected to. It led to very pleasant results for both master and dog."

This raised a laugh around the table, and Gordon was obliged to join in it, although at his own expense. Miss Gray explained that they all felt rather grateful to Bran for his somewhat brusque mode of making friends; it had made their trip to the North much pleasanter to have some one outside their own party to talk with. Every one had a word of praise for Bran, and he was even credited with having intentionally brought about the introduction of his master to the American party.

But Mr. Muir was not going to let Clare off without a final shot.

"Can you give me any authority for making pets of dogs, for treating them as if they had power to appreciate what is done for them?" he asked, with a look that said plainly he had now asked her more than she could answer.

"Why, it says in the Bible — doesn't it? — that 'the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.' Now,

if they are under the table, it seems as if the people must be very kind to their dogs to have them so near to themselves. Don't you think so?" asked Clare, appealing directly to their host.

Mr. Muir was convinced of the power of his fair opponent. He laughed most heartily; he thought it the rarest of jokes that he, an elder, should be out-argued by a Bible text in the mouth of a young girl who was pleading the cause of her canine friends.

After tea they all went out to visit the garden, and Meena and Agnes cut roses for each of the guests to carry home. Mollie had begged to see the two boys who owned the collection of birds' eggs, and she was now chatting with them in the house while they took their tea. They disclosed numerous plans to her, and after their repast was ended showed her which of their eggs had been the hardest to get, and told how they managed to secure them. They next invited Mollie to go with them to see some sheep that their father had given them and they

had fed and cared for while they were "wee lammies." Mollie was able to caress the woolly creatures as much as she desired, the boys calling them up and holding them for her. She said she had just ached to bury her fingers in the soft fleece of the sheep she had seen around "Birkie House," but they were too wild to let her approach them.

Mr. Gray and his host were going across the field to look at some polled cattle that Mr. Muir had recently purchased. Mollie accepted their invitation to accompany them, and the two boys, who found Mollie good company, went too. On the way they met Clare and Gordon, who had been to the cottage of the shepherd who had given Bran his early training. The man had several young collies in his charge, and was very glad to explain his methods of instruction. Bran always made a daily call on his old teacher, when he was in the vicinity. He was now returning with his master from his second visit for this day, having made one in the early morning. All three joined Mollie and her party and visited the odd-looking polled cattle, with their smooth, black coats and hornless heads. The latter peculiarity makes the creatures look very gentle and defenceless.

When they all got back to the house it was nine o'clock, and Aunt Jessie thought it was time to be setting out for "Birkie House." Gordon went out to see the ponies and wagonette made ready, and, after a great many last things had been said, the Grays and their young people drove off down the avenue, turning to

wave adieus to the charming family group who stood near the garden gate watching their departure.

On the homeward way they drove through the grounds of "Glengower" to wish the family there good night. They heard that a letter had been received from Mr. and Mrs. Wales, announcing a visit to be made to Aunt Nannie and Uncle David. Everybody was glad of this news, for every one liked Cousin Flora and her noble "gude-man."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MIDSUMMER FAIR.

A Scotch town, on ordinary occasions, presents a sombre appearance. The buildings are of stone, darkened by bituminous coal smoke, poured forth by the wide chimneys with which every house is plentifully provided. The gardens and lawns are usually in the rear of the houses, and cannot be seen from the street. Those shops and houses which stand on the thoroughfares are built close upon one another as in a city, thus presenting a long array of neutral background for whatever life and color may come into view.

When Miss Gray and the girls reached the main street of Tain on the following forenoon, behold! everything was transformed. All about the sidewalk were booths for the display of various wares. Enterprising merchants were calling the attention of the crowd with all the persuasiveness of a Yankee "Cheap Jack." About the booths some of the country people were congregated, but most of them seemed happy in wandering aimlessly up and down the street, chatting in subdued tones with their friends. Shepherds and gamekeepers had come in to the fair, and looked picturesque enough in their tweed costumes. Here and there a Highland soldier in full dress made love to some favored lassie, and was

at the same time himself a most attractive object. The fish-wives laughed and talked in groups, and offered fresh fish for sale. With their creels on their backs, their tucked-up skirts and little plaid shoulder shawls, they looked as if they were posing for a picture. Their strong, sensible faces, tinged with the glow of health, were rendered more attractive by the white caps they wore. The girls were fascinated by these women, and Mollie engaged several of them in conversation. Elizabeth longed to make a sketch, but feared the fish-wives might consider it an indignity. She used her eyes well and made up her mind to draw them from memory. Leta wished for Hal's camera. As they were buying some of the queer-looking "toffy" to take to the coachman's little children, Mr. Muir and Uncle Duncan came up and spoke to them. They were talking business together and planning a trip to the sheep market at Inverness.

"And how do you like a Scotch fair?" asked Mr. Muir. "Have you seen Gordon this morning? He is down with his sisters. There they come!"

The Muirs had a spare seat or two in their wagonette, and offered to take some of Miss Gray's party up to "Birkie House." Uncle Duncan offered them the two rear seats in his dog-cart, in which he and his coachman had come down. Gordon insisted on giving up his place, as he said Agnes could drive the pony as far as Mr. Gray's and wait for him there.

Miss Gray wanted the girls to have a look at some of

the antiquities of Tain. Hitherto they had only had passing glimpses as they rode by. So Gordon escorted them to the ancient Church of St. Duthac, around whose ruins cluster many historic memories. King James IV. is said to have made pilgrimages of remorse to this shrine, which was founded by his injured father. They also saw the old Collegiate Church of Tain, which has been restored, and is a very fine building. Mollie expressed her desire to inspect more closely the fine monument which they had observed whenever they rode through the main street. It stands in a pretty little park and commemorates the good deeds of a deceased "provost," or chief magistrate of the town. So thither they went. Their photograph of the street scene in Tain, with the large flock of sheep, included this handsome Gothic structure, and they were all glad to see it. The beautiful thatch of some of the houses in the town drew the attention of

the girls. The straw was so fresh in color, and was laid upon the roofs with such precision, that the effect was most pleasing.

Mollie and Elizabeth were the last in this "personally conducted" party of sight-seers, and as they passed a shop window Mollie caught a glimpse of some photographs, and darted into the shop, drawing Elizabeth with her. "Have you any views of the clock tower?" she asked the serious young clerk who came forward as they entered. They were fortunate enough to find one or two of Wilson's fine views of the High Street, giving an impressive picture of the turreted stone tower, and then hastened after their friends, who were waiting for them at the postoffice. Each of the girls wrote a postcard in the office, briefly describing the Midsummer Fair, and mailed it to her home.

The afternoon was a busy but quiet one. Clare and Leta prepared the seaweeds they had brought from Cromarty Firth, for mounting on paper, so that they could be carried safely. Mollie and Miss Gray replied to letters, while Elizabeth wrote up the notebook and worked upon her memory sketch of the fish-wives. Uncle Duncan found them all thus occupied when he came in from a drive to a neighboring town, where he had been to attend a sale of wheat. Aunt Jessie sat in the midst of this busy group, looking very sweet and motherly. Her black dress set off her fair hair and the soft pink of her complexion. Uncle Duncan paused on the threshold as he opened the door. It was a pleasant sight to greet a

man on his home-coming. Would it might always be thus! The next instant he had recovered himself, and his hearty voice was heard calling them his "clever lassies," and announcing that he was nearly starved, and hoped the dinner was ready.

Aunt Jessie rose to go to the kitchen, and Miss Gray assisted her uncle to remove his driving-coat. Clare carried it out into the hall, and Mollie drew up an easy-chair and made Mr. Gray settle down before the fire. They gathered up their work and in a few moments Maggie's gentle voice announced dinner.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SACRAMENT DAY.

THE next day was a kind of Sabbath. It was the first of the "Sacrament Days" which would continue through the Holy Communion of the following Sunday. There was a more than usual quiet about the house, as servants and master would attend church and unnecessary labor would be avoided.

The service was participated in by several clergymen, the sermon being preached by a celebrated divine from Inverness. It was rather lengthy, and Uncle Duncan was moved to look at his watch. Miss Gray was amused at him, and after church recalled the stories her father had told her of the long church services which were indulged in when he was a boy in Scotland.

"You are nearly as impatient as an American, uncle, and quite as full of business, I think," she said, giving him a quizzical little smile.

"When a man has business to attend to, it fills up his mind. These preachers forget there is anything else to be thought about but their own way of looking at a difficult passage in the good Book. It's all very well for them, but a man cannot listen for everlasting." Uncle Duncan drew a long breath as he shook the reins over

the sleek backs of the ponies, and they stepped rapidly homeward.

Mr. and Mrs. Wales reached "Glengower" that afternoon, and the "Birkie House" family all went over to call upon them. Clare inquired for good little Prince, the hospitable doggie, who had been such a favorite during their short stay in Glasgow. Mr. Wales had bad news to give of him. He had developed a severe case of mange, which the dog doctor said came of his indoor living and his fondness for sweets. So they had decided to leave him with the doctor for treatment, and hoped he would improve before they returned to the city.

The ladies all went up to the pretty chamber where Mrs. Wales was unpacking her trunk. She was as cordial as ever, and delighted to see her Cousin Jeanie and the American lassies. They told her how kind her brother, Mr. Bell, had been about helping them to see the sights of Edinburgh.

"Indeed; and that is what he should do. A young man like Hugh should make himself useful, and I will write myself and tell him not to spare himself. He has plenty of time in the summer, and he should be glad of a chance to help you to enjoy yourselves, — that he should," said voluble Mrs. Wales, as she shook out a dress she had just taken from her trunk.

Elizabeth had discovered from the window a charming and extensive view, and called the girls to enjoy it. They could look off upon Dornoch Firth, an arm of the German Ocean, or North Sea. At the mouth of the Firth

was discernible the sand-bar which makes its entrance from the ocean quite difficult. North of the Firth rise the Sutherland Hills, and on a conspicuous height stands the gigantic statue of a former Duke of Sutherland. It is visible for miles by land and sea.

"That is Ben Bhraggie," said Aunt Nannie. "You will have a nearer view of the Duke's statue, Jeanie, as

you go to Brora. You must try to see Dunrobin while you are in the vicinity. It is likely your cousin will take you there. It is a fine castle. I mind being there, a good many years ago now, and seeing the beautiful apartments that had been fitted up for her Majesty."

Mr. Wales was calling the girls to "come down and have a sing," so it was not many minutes before their

voices were blending sweetly in one of Aunt Jessie's favorite hymns.

She sat a little apart and listened with quiet delight as the young voices sang the words of cheer and comfort. Aunt Nannie stole to the back of her sister's chair and leant over, with a hand upon her shoulder.

"How dear mother would enjoy their singing!" she whispered.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CROFTER'S HOME.

"In heaven itself, I'll ask no more,
Than just a Highland welcome."

—*Robert Burns.*

Miss Gray's ancestors on her father's side were Highland peasants, poor in this world's goods, but rich in the treasures of that integrity that holds its head high in the presence of kings. Occasionally some member of the family, burning with a desire for knowledge that should enable him to preach the Word, had by superhuman efforts starved himself through a university course, only to die in the early years of his ministry. Nothing daunted by his example, others strove to emulate the measure of success to which he had attained.

Uncle Duncan had been born in a crofter's cottage in Sutherland, but he might well have been the son of a shrewd Yankee, so energetic was his temperament and so far-seeing his judgment. He was keenly alive to the apparent injustice that gave to so many of his neighbors and friends the poorest semblance of a shelter, with the meanest food, while to the favored great man of the region were secured more than one magnificent dwelling, with dainty fare, and miles of territory, with their fish and

game. There was in his make-up that which could not accept this inequality of condition. He saw his countrymen driven to far-away places to make new homes, where they might possess more than the bare necessities of existence. To Australia, to New Zealand, to America, his young friends had gone, and letters and newspapers had brought tidings of their success. He looked about him, — on the sea, with its offers of merchandise, on the hills and valleys, with their pasturage for flocks, — and he said: —

"Here is room enough for a man to make his way. I will not be driven away from the Highlands, where my race has been known so long. I will fight my way out of this poverty, and if God is good and just he will help me in this unequal fight." And bravely and well had Duncan Gray borne himself in the contest, faithfully aided by his devoted wife. He had overcome so much himself that he had none too much patience with those who accepted their hard lot as a duty, submitting to hardships in pathetic inertness.

"They had as good a chance as I had," he would say when Miss Gray brought the subject forward; "why do they not improve it?"

"But, uncle dear, it all lies in knowing what to do with a chance when you have it. That is a great gift; you have it, and you cannot understand how people can be without it," Miss Gray would reply, with such earnestness that her uncle would say quickly, —

"Yes, lass: I believe you see farther than most of

us into the philosophy of matters and things. You're a wise lass; you have the Scotch in you."

The friends in Brora who had invited Miss Gray to visit them lived in comfortable though humble circumstances. Cousin Wilhelmina's husband was a crofter of the better class; that is to say, he hired the little field, or "croft," upon which he raised the vegetables for his family and the grass for his horse and cow. His wife had received from her father the cottage in which they lived, and of which, with its bit of ground, they possessed a kind of freehold right. Before the famous Sutherland Clearances the Grays had lived upon the fertile tract of land called "strath," Brora. Driven forth from this beloved region, they, with some of their neighbors, had made their home for a time in Caithness, the most northern shire in Scotland. Donald Gray, Miss Gray's great-grandfather, with a love for his native region, had purchased a cottage from a family about to sail for America, and brought his family back to Brora, though not to the pleasant "strath." This cottage had descended to the son or daughter who remained by the old people. Here Miss Gray's father had been born, and from this cottage he had set out for the far-away shores of America, determined, when quite young, that he would not stay where "straths" belonged to dukes, and the fish in the lochs were only for the privileged few.

It was a sunshiny morning when Miss Gray and Elizabeth left Tain for the trip to Brora. The girls had begged to have Elizabeth accompany Miss Gray on her

journey, as she was their "special artist" and could bring them sketches of what she saw. Under the circumstances it seemed impossible to take more than one of her girls, and Miss Gray was glad to have them decide the matter for themselves and for her. Uncle Duncan consoled the others by promising that they should make some excursions with him, in which they would be joined by Mr. and Mrs. Wales, who would fill up the vacant places of the Sutherland tourists.

The scenery on the Highland Railway is varied and lovely. Dornoch Firth is close beside the railway during the first portion of the distance between Tain and Brora. Miss Gray and Elizabeth had entered a "third-class" compartment, and had it all to themselves. They were able to go from one end to the other as the view was more desirable. Elizabeth hummed, —

"My heart's in the Highlands,"

and seemed perfectly content. The trim stone stations along the route were brilliant with bright flowers, and the people about them were interesting to watch. One after another the stations were passed, and the *détour*, which is made in swinging around Dornoch Firth, was ended at the "Mound," a well-constructed embankment across Loch Fleet. A little farther on and they had a fine view of the colossal statue on Ben Bhraggie. Then came a charming glimpse of Dunrobin on the right, its pointed turrets gleaming gray amid the trees. A pretty rustic station, bearing the name "Dunrobin," is for the private use of the Duke and his guests.

At Brora, Miss Gray was met by her Cousin Wilhelmina and her entire family, — husband and three little girls. Another "cousin" came forward with Cousin Wilhelmina to meet the travellers as they alighted. These two women were of the dark Highland type, with gentle, sensitive manners, in which cordiality was tempered with shyness.

Miss Gray had a ready capacity for meeting people half-way, and it took but a moment to set her Highland relatives at ease. The children, who had been wildly expectant over the arrival of "the Americans," were won by the pleasant smiles with which the two strangers

greeted them. Their father was waiting at a little distance with his pony and farm cart to carry the ladies out to his cottage, provided the two miles which intervened were considered by them too long a walk. He was a quiet man, chary of words, and with a touch of Highland reserve. Possibly he was uncertain as to

whether this new relative of his wife was quite to be trusted. She came from that far-off land of plenty, where crofters were unknown and where even the servants received a fortune for a year's service. Would this unknown and perhaps proud guest be willing to visit in their lowly home? Would she feel it a condescension to partake of their simple fare? These were questions that he had already laid before his wife, but without shaking her faith in the power of kinship which united herself and this American cousin.

"Jamie, man, it shames me to hear words like that. My cousin is a Gray, and you mind what like the Grays have ever been, — as proud as proud of their honesty and good name, but never given over to worldly lusts. And I've often heard yourself praising America as a place where a man could live up to the best that was in him. We will give my Cousin Jeanie a true Highland welcome, and I know very well by the letter she wrote me she will be deserving of our confidence."

Wilhelmina Gray Adam knew how to silence, if not convince, her dark-eyed husband, and he henceforth acceded to all her preparations for the coming guest; yet there had been trepidation in both their breasts as they waited for the train which was bringing the object of so many exciting thoughts.

But when Miss Gray and Elizabeth shook hands so freely with Mr. Adam, and their eyes met his for a moment, all restraint for him was at an end. He knew them for true-hearted women, and henceforth his most

chivalrous attention to their needs as guests was insured. When they expressed their intention to walk out to the cottage, permitting the children to ride and take charge of their hand bags, his admiration was aroused.

It was a kind of triumphal march for the four women who left the village to go out to Mrs. Adam's home. The advent of "the Americans" was an event for all the connections and friends of the Gray family. At some of the cottage doors a company was waiting to beg them to enter and partake of refreshment. The aged mother of Cousin Maggie stood in the porch of her little white cottage, the tears in her eyes, as she welcomed this daughter of Thomas Gray, whom she remembered as a young lad more than forty years before. There was much to be said in the few minutes that Cousin Wilhelmina permitted for this visit. Old Mrs. Ross insisted that her guests should have a second glass of ginger wine and another biscuit. She could not do enough to show her hospitable intentions. She clung to Miss Gray, in whom she fancied she saw a likeness of her own mother; and it required all Mrs. Adam's decision to extricate her guests and start them once more on their way.

At another cottage they must stop and see a portrait of a great-uncle of Miss Gray, who had been famous as a Free Church preacher in the days of the great disruption of 1843. More refreshments were in order, here and their host and hostess were very loath to give them up. Promises to come again at length appeased these hospitable hearts, and Mrs. Adam asserted that her guests

should make no more calls until they had become rested. Indeed, Miss Gray felt the need of this kind interference in her behalf, for so much conversation upon the long-gone past was beginning to strain both heart and nerves. The sky had grown dull above them as they proceeded; the hills, not far away, looked solemn in the absence of the sunshine; and at intervals the North Sea showed chill and forbidding.

Talking with the aged friends who had known her father's people, most of whom were now no more, had stirred the sympathies usually so well under control; and it seemed to Miss Gray that life in this northern region was made up of sombre scenes. She wondered not that her father should have rebelled against his lot and gone forth to brighter prospects of life. As she looked at the hills and the sea, she wondered what thoughts had surged in his brain as he looked on them for the last time. He had always been a man given to intervals of silence, and she had known that at such times he had long thoughts and deep. Now she felt that she knew better what some of those thoughts might be, and she longed to be with him after this visit to talk with him about his young days in Scotland. She had a romantic devotion to her father; and they were more to each other than ordinary father and daughter, but the habit of untranslatable thought was strong in them both. She now knew whence it came. It was their inheritance from a long line of Highland ancestry. Given those hills, the cruel sea, that lowering sky, those low stone

dwellings, the absence of all luxury, how could it result otherwise? Cousin Wilhelmina realized in her shyly appreciative way the effect of her surroundings on her American cousin, and strove to do all in her power to make her comfortable in her home.

Most Highland cots contain two rooms, "a but and a ben"; but this one had an additional room of state, added when Mrs. Adam's mother came as a bride to the cottage. In this apartment was a modern grate, and seeing that both Miss Gray and Elizabeth shivered, their hostess made a fire of peats in this grate. At first it seemed but a mockery of fire and warmth, the clods caught fire so reluctantly. Swirls of yellow smoke arose slowly as if undecided whether to seek the outer world or to curl themselves lazily about the peats. At length the heart of each peat seemed to be on fire, and a lighter smoke, pale as the blue of a summer sky, soared upward through the wide, stone chimney and trailed away into the air.

Elizabeth sketched the fire as she and Miss Gray sat close before it striving to fancy they felt warm. She wanted to convey to the other girls as accurately as possible the interior of this Highland cottage, which was so strangely unlike any she or they had seen. The deep-set windows, with their dimity half-curtains, and the plants on their wide shelves, let in but moderate supplies of light. In this room was also the best bed, built into a square recess provided for the purpose. From a sort of ridge-pole above the bed was hung a curtain of blue and white cotton, reaching beyond the head and foot

of the bed like a canopy. A little table in the middle of the room was set for two, and Mrs. Adam was busy in the kitchen preparing the meal.

Thither Elizabeth went to watch the process of boiling the teakettle over a peat fire. In a little arched fireplace, the kettle was suspended from a pothook, and under it a mere handful of peats produced heat enough to actually make the water boil and bubble in most vigorous style. The three wide-eyed lassies flitted about the newcomers like birds, and were frequently warned by their mother to "go ben"; that is, to go away to another part of the dwelling so as to leave the guests in peace. But did she succeed in ejecting them from the guest-room, they soon presented themselves outside the two little windows and peered earnestly within.

When they had eaten their lunch and rested, the visitors gladdened the hearts of the bairns by going out for a walk about the cottage. They called on the little black cow in her "byre," or stable, and inspected the winter supply of peats, piled beside the byre. They crossed the road and sat on an opposite stone wall, that Elizabeth might have a good point of view for a sketch of the cottage. A man came trudging up the road, pausing at the group to inquire his way.

"I am a stranger hereabouts," he said. "I am three hundred miles from my home."

"I am three *thousand* miles from mine," replied Elizabeth, with a kindly but amused smile at the effect of her information, as the man started and looked at her, speech-

less in the presence of so travelled a woman. "We are from America," she continued, "and are visiting at this cottage. Run, Tina, and ask your mother to tell the man his way."

Mrs. Adam was already on the scene, and after a chat the stranger continued his journey with quite a new train of thought.

In the evening, as the children and the guests sat in the fire light while Mr. and Mrs. Adam were busy with the milking, an old Highlander came to pay his respects to the American ladies. He had himself been in America, had taken his bride there, intending to spend the rest of his life in the *New Scotland*, or Nova Scotia. But his luck was not good; he found his "bawbees" were melting away, and no American coins found their way into the vacuum. So, with true Scotch prudence, he turned his face back to his native land once again. He was now drawing near to the end of his life-journey; his wife lay in the little walled graveyard, and he made his home with a daughter. His delight at the kindly way in which the strangers listened to his story and answered his questions was almost childish. Not for years had such enlivening sensations been his; he would talk about this interview as long as he lived.

On Sunday, morning after breakfast, Elizabeth produced a little book of "Gospel Hymns," which was in one of her ulster pockets, and the little Adam lassies gathered around her while she taught them several simple tunes and the accompanying words. The children had good

ears for music and soon were able to sing quite correctly. The father and mother stood in the doorway with rapture in their looks. After a time Mr. Adam came softly in and sat down. The music of the children, joined in by Miss Gray and Elizabeth, was to him a great treat. He had never heard anything like it; his head sank forward, he covered his eyes with his hands and sat motionless, silently drinking in every sound. The mother, with feminine facility, showed her appreciation in smiles and broken expressions of approval. It was a scene that told volumes. That a man should have the capacity to be so moved by this simple music, and should have in his life so little to satisfy any longing for beauty and art, was, as Elizabeth said to Miss Gray afterward, "almost tragic."

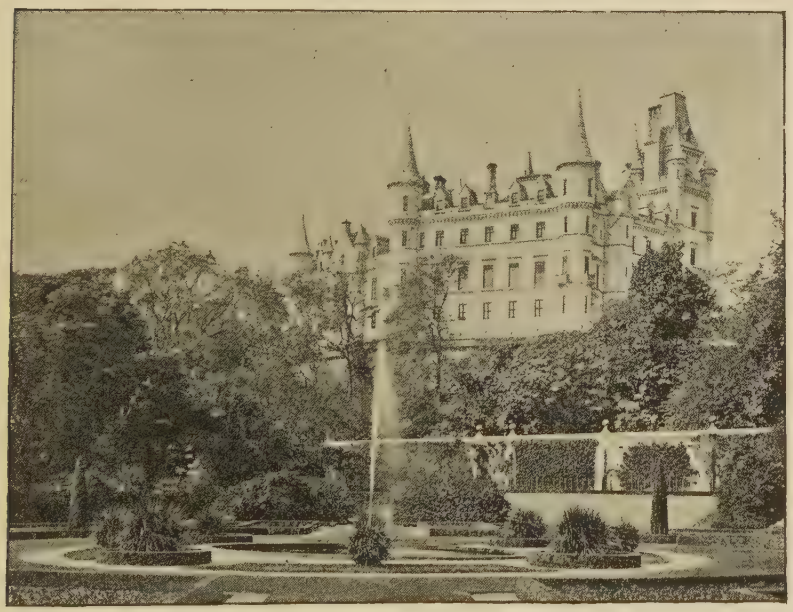
The music lesson of that still Sabbath morning will be a power to cheer and develop that cottage family throughout their lives.

The guests and Mrs. Adam took the long walk to the Free Church. It was not Communion Sunday, for that had been in this district a week ago. After the service they made some calls upon relatives residing in the village, and whom Miss Gray had not yet seen.

In the afternoon Mr. Adam took the children and the guests down upon the shore of the North Sea, and they walked over the yellow-brown sand and found a few sea-weeds. In the evening "the Books" were placed on the table,—the Bible and the Psalm-book. After worship the little girls were anxious to prove their skill at

remembering the newly acquired hymns, and they had an hour of singing, — another glimpse into Paradise for Mr. Adam.

The hoped-for opportunity to visit Dunrobin Castle came in a day or so. After viewing the finely kept gardens and such portions of the castle interior as are



shown to the public, Miss Gray invited her cousins to a lunch at the Sutherland Arms Hotel near the village of Golspie.

The next day the two guests went with Mr. Adam and the lassies up to his little croft upon the hillside, and

came down with armfuls of pink-flowered heather. Miss Gray enclosed a spray in the letter which she sent her father from this, his birthplace. Although Brora seemed so far to the north, beautiful roses were blooming in the little gardens of their friends, and when they took the train to leave, each of the tourists carried several bunches of red and white roses.

CHAPTER XXV.

GOING TOWARD THE SOUTH.

The returning travellers had a warm reception when they alighted at Tain. The Muirs, the Grays, and several friends of both were in waiting, so that there was quite an array of vehicles,—two wagonettes, the "Glengower" phaeton, and Uncle Duncan's dogcart. Each party tried to induce Miss Gray and Elizabeth to get into their trap. At length the matter was settled, and the company set out for "Glengower," where they were all to dine. There was a great deal of news to be exchanged. The Tain party had not been idle. Gordon had taken the girls across the Firth, where they had visited the thatched cottage where Hugh Miller was born, and procured photographs enough to satisfy even Mollie. Uncle Duncan had taken the Waleses and his own guests to Ardross Castle, and they had been shown all over the handsome modern edifice, and visited the gardens.

"And at last," said Mollie, "we found out something about the 'monkey-puzzle,' which had become *our* puzzle too. One of the gardeners at Ardross told us that the tree is sometimes called Norfolk Island pine, but the botanical name is *Araucaria*, and it does grow in Australia and neighboring islands. When it grows to its natural size it makes very fine timber. Haven't I learnt my

lesson well?" asked Mollie, with her head held very straight and a "good little girl" expression.

"You deserve 'honorable mention' in the Notes of the Great American Travellers, and you shall have it," said Elizabeth. "It is a great relief not to have the monkey-puzzle on our long list of 'things to look up.'"

Then Leta told of taking tea at a delightful place called Rose Hill, where they met three of the most attractive young Scotch ladies, who played tennis, took charge of the home gardening and marketing, did beautiful fancy-work, sang the most bewitching songs, and discoursed on current and classic authors, all with the greatest facility and charm. There had also been a day's outing at a picturesque place on the seashore, where they had visited the lighthouse and had a picnic dinner on the rocks.

"And we have kept the notebook most thoroughly too, Miss Gray," said Clare. "And Gordon — Mr. Muir — said he would help us and take Elizabeth's place, so he wrote up the day we spent at Hugh Miller's home."

Miss Gray looked a little anxiously at the clear, sweet face of her charge, and wondered if "Gordon" had written all that was in his heart. A sense of responsibility, almost more than she felt equal to, seemed to oppress her. They had just reached the door of "Glengower," and Gordon Muir was helping Clare out of his wagonette, an exultant look in his eyes that belied the air of calm deference with which he took both the small gloved hands in his as

Clare prepared to jump from the high rear step of the carriage. Truly he was a noble fellow, this young Scotchman, whose heart beat in sympathy with the humblest living creature, and who was always manly and respectful to old and young. Miss Gray was given to careful consideration of character as indicated by externals, and she

had no fault to find with this "Young Lochinvar." Aunt Jessie, too, had none but words of praise for him; and even Uncle Duncan, accustomed to exact much, always spoke with respect of young Muir.

And yet the new phase of circumstances was a troublous one for Miss Gray. Late at night Aunt Jessie came to her room and they talked the matter over. Aunt

Jessie saw her niece's cause for anxiety, but she consoled her as far as she could.

"These things are beyond our control, dear Jeanie. What must be must be, and if God wills that these two young lives be united, it will all be well. You must leave it all with him, dear child. The lassie is a dear lamb; she's angel sweet: but Gordie is just such a lad as I fain would have for my own son; he's true and pure."

"But Clare's father! O auntie, I feel so burdened at the possibility of having to bear his disapproval. I might have refused to let the incident with Bran go any further; but then, Gordon lived just here, where we were coming; what good would it have done? It seems like fate. But I must do as you say, auntie, and not try to carry the burden myself. Good night, dear auntie; you must be very tired, it is so late."

"Good night, Jeanie, pet, and sleep soundly, never fearing but right will come when all is right at heart."

. . . . . .

Uncle Duncan tried hard to persuade his niece that it would be for the good of herself and the girls to spend all the rest of their vacation at "Birkie House," and "never mind going to these strange cities, and to these extortionate hotels." But Miss Gray held to her programme so tenaciously that he had to give in. The girls began to pack their recently acquired souvenirs into safe corners of their trunks, and Mollie got out the guide-books that might be needed as they went south. Miss Gray went to "Glengower" for a day or two; the girls had

already paid short visits, two at a time, and Aunt Nannie felt sad at the thought of not seeing their bright faces.

Meena and Agnes Muir were going with them to Inverness to visit the sister who was married there. As the girls had been so pleased with their first glimpse of the fair capital of the Highlands, they were now going to stay a few days there. Gordon promised to see them all in Glasgow as they set out for America. He would return to the University to finish his medical course. A wealthy uncle, his mother's oldest brother, was sending him through his studies. He was a bachelor and desired to have his nephew and namesake with him in New South Wales, where he felt that there was great need of well-educated physicians. Uncle and nephew had kept up a most devoted correspondence for years, and looked forward to the time when they should live together.

Miss Gray's party put up at the Station Hotel when they reached Inverness; it was the most convenient place from which to pursue their journey. The Muirs' sister, who lived in one of the pretty houses not far from the river, had sent a kind invitation for them to come to her; but all agreed that it would be putting her to too much trouble, and it would be best for them to be more centrally located in order to do their sight-seeing. The shops proved as fascinating as Miss Gray had predicted. Quite close to the hotel they found a place where clan tartans were for sale, and each bought some of the rich plaid goods. Then there were pebble jewelry and various pretty things that would be nice for gifts to friends who

had only heard of Scotland; and the photographs! — they were all that could be desired. Mollie had made out a list of the views she had already secured, so as not to run the risk of duplicating. In the afternoon the Misses Muir came to take them to their sister's to tea.

The next day they all drove out to Culloden Moor to see the cairn and the green mounds that mark the famous battlefield. In the evening a visit was made to the pretty islands in the River Ness, a kind of pleasure-ground for the inhabitants of the city. A peaceful hour was spent the following day in walking through Tomnahurich Cemetery. The castle, the remains of the old fort on Craig Phadrick, and the cathedral all received due attention at the hands of the enthusiastic party of young Americans. The beautiful sculptured baptismal font in the cathedral called forth much admiration. Mollie had read in her guidebook of the ancient Clach-na-cuddin Stone, which was regarded as a sort of palladium of the city. From it all public proclamations used to be

made. She found it built into the foundation of a handsome fountain in front of the Town Hall.

The girls left Inverness with reluctance, and felt that Professor Blackie's sonnet voiced their own feelings in regard to the pleasant city.

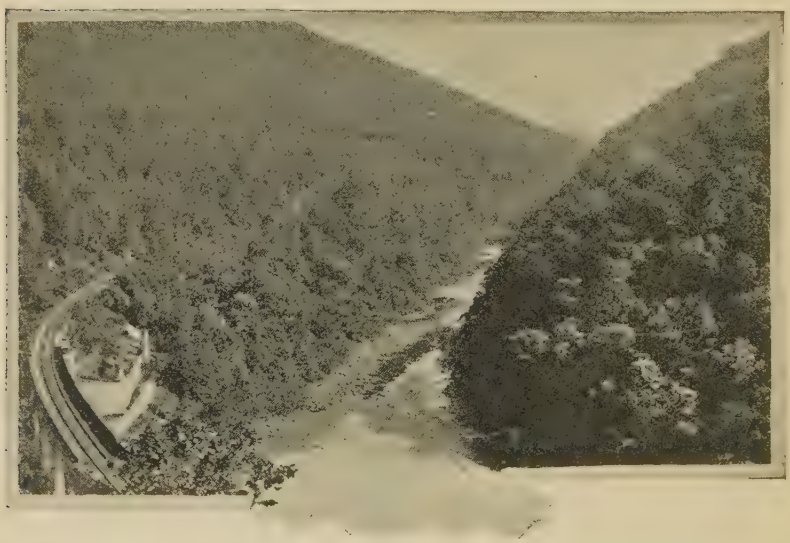
> "All things that make a city fair are thine,
> The rightful queen and sovereign of this land
> Of bens and glens and valiant men."

They stayed long enough at Forres to drive about and see some of its antiquities. The moor where the witches in "Macbeth" carried on their strange revels was of great interest to the girls, who had studied this tragedy in their Shakespeare Club.

From Forres to Blair-Athole, where Miss Gray had thought best to break the long trip to Edinburgh, the scenery was a perpetual feast. They had a very comfortable first-class carriage to themselves. It was like a little square room, and had two large plate-glass windows which made the rapidly presented views seem like pictures in frames. After running along the valley of the Spey, and the lovely region near Boat of Garten, the railway begins to ascend the Grampian Hills. To the east are seen the group called the Cairngorm Cluster, holding their heads majestically high, as becomes such monarchs. A shower in the vicinity produced fine effects as the train sped on its way, and the view constantly altered. At Dal-na-Spidal the highest point of the road is reached, nearly fifteen hundred feet above sea level. As the

train descends, going toward the south, the motion is perceptibly quickened, and it almost seems as if the passengers were being run away with.

At Blair-Athole a pleasant sojourn was made. After a good night's rest the girls were out early to view their surroundings. They were eager to walk through the



Pass of Killiecrankie, and enjoyed its beauties as much as they had expected. They saw the place where the short but decisive battle was fought, and the very spot where "Bonnie Dundee" fell. Afterwards they went to see his grave, and the cuirass with the fatal hole made by the silver button with which he is said to have been shot. This relic is in the hall of Blair Castle, where the hero

was taken to die. "Dundee" is known in history as Graham of Claverhouse, who so relentlessly persecuted the Scotch Covenanters in the reign of Charles the Second. He afterwards joined the Jacobite cause in the Highlands, and led his forces against the soldiers of William and Mary, under General Mackay. The king's forces were routed, but the Highlanders, disheartened at the loss of their leader, were soon subdued. To the Jacobites, Viscount Dundee was a hero, — the last of the brave and gallant Grahams; and his death at the moment of victory has always covered his name with glory. To the Covenanters, who resisted the oppression of a misguided monarch, he was a cruel and dreaded oppressor. King James the Second, in 1688, raised him to the peerage, with the titles Viscount Dundee and Lord Graham of Claverhouse. The Grahams were a branch of the noble family of Montrose.

The whole region about Blair-Athole is beautifully picturesque, abounding in mountain cascades, wild ravines, and numberless points of view. Of the last the most magnificent is "the Queen's View." Thither the Gray party drove in the early morning of their last day at Blair.

A few hours were spent in Perth to visit scenes made immortal in Scott's "Fair Maid of Perth." Perth is beautifully situated on the River Tay, and possesses many historic attractions. Close by is Scone Palace, famous in early Scotch history as the residence of kings and the scene of their coronation. In the ancient abbey, long

since destroyed, was kept the "Holy Stone of Scone." At Luncarty a few miles up the river, the Scots defeated the Danes in the year 946. Here it was, as tradition tells us, that the thistle played so important a part in Scottish history. The Danes discovered the Scotch army asleep on the moor, and were about to surprise and probably overpower them. One of the barefooted Danes had the misfortune to step upon a thistle, and in his sudden distress gave a yell of pain. The noise aroused the Scots, and they chose the plant that had saved them as a national badge, with the motto, *Nemo me impune lacessit.*

The girls were almost sad at the thought of leaving the Highlands.

"I could just cry if it would do any good," said Mollie, with a rueful glance backward as the train pulled out of the handsome Perth station. "It seems as if we had actually seen the last of the dear Scotch Highlands now. O Miss Gray! do you suppose we shall ever come again?"

"We will live in hope, and treasure our memories," said Miss Gray, heaving a little sigh in spite of herself.

"Let's sing that song that Hal was always quoting when we were home last spring," suggested Leta. "We have the carriage all to ourselves."

Elizabeth took the book of Scotch songs that Cousin Hugh had selected for her out of her satchel, and found the song indicated. They sang the first stanza quite

bravely, but Mollie took time before beginning the next to observe, —

"I'm saddest when I sing, girls," and the music continued.

"Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the north,
The birthplace of valor, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands forever I love.

"Farewell to the mountains high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods."

CHAPTER XXVI.

OUTINGS IN EDINBURGH.

It was late in the evening when they reached Edinburgh. They went directly to the Clarendon Hotel, where Miss Gray had telegraphed for rooms. Their glimpse of the city by gaslight was enchanting, although the party were all too weary to make an effort to see more.

Their hotel was opposite the Castle, and the first sight that greeted them through the morning haze was the dim outline of that guardian fortress. Quite a package

of letters had awaited their arrival, and they decided to answer such as required immediate replies before attempting any of the sights of the city. Clare had hardly been able to sleep on account of the news contained in the letter she had received from her father. She was to see him soon! His letter was dated from Liverpool just after his arrival. He wrote: —

"Let me know when you are to be in the Trossachs and I will meet you there. Will stay a week if possible, and we can all enjoy it together. I have brought a camera and will take you all as Ladies of the Lake. I have a piece of news to tell you which will surprise you; but wait till I have it all arranged. Will tell you when I see you, which I long to do: can hardly wait. Do *you* want to see

YOUR LOVING PAPA?"

"Oh, *don't* I want to see him? How long will it be before we go to the Trossachs, Miss Gray?" questioned Clare, as she sat, pen in hand, re-reading her father's letter and preparing to answer it.

Miss Gray was consulting the list of Edinburgh sights which she had planned to see. She looked doubtful for a moment and then said, "As your father wants us to stay some time at the Trossachs, it will be best to put off going there until we have finished our Edinburgh programme. Do you think you could be patient till then?"

"Why, yes, of course, Miss Gray. When you are always so kind about making us happy, I should be a very ungrateful girl to ask you to change your plans for me. Papa would not like me to do anything of that kind.

I can keep thinking how near he is, and shall enjoy everything more because I am going to see him so soon."

Clare rose and stood by Miss Gray, with her arm about her, while they looked at the itinerary together.

"Clare is a darling to be willing to wait," said Leta. "If it were my father, I don't know but I should desert the party and run off to Liverpool to see him."

"I thought we were 'Miss Gray's girls' and were going wherever she went. Who is talking about 'deserting the party'"? came from Elizabeth, who was diligently writing up notes.

"So we are, now and forever. Leta is only talking nonsense, and Miss Gray knows we are only too happy to follow her; don't you, Miss Gray?"

"I do, indeed," Miss Gray replied to Mollie's earnest question. "But it is a very great attraction to resist when one's papa is not far away, and I know just how hard it is for Clare. Our time is fleeting, however, and we would best make sure of all we can while here, and then go on to the next place. So, Clare, I think you may write your father that we will be at the Trossachs Hotel on the twelfth. Ask him to let us know if that date is satisfactory to him. Now, just as soon as we can get our mail ready, I think we will begin by going over to see our great neighbor, the Castle."

As they went down to the street door they met Miss Gray's cousin Hugh coming to offer his services as escort. When they had visited the Crown room and Saint Margaret's chapel, paid their respects to the big

gun known as Mons Meg, and purchased some of the pretty photographs in Queen Mary's room, they seemed to have seen all that was offered by the Castle.

"I think," said Miss Gray, as they came down the steep path, "that you will like best to remember the Castle as you see it from various parts of the city. It is a grand feature in the view, but seems to lose a little of its grandeur when one goes into the rooms and tries to recall the past."

Cousin Hugh presently told them that if they desired to visit some of the "closes," there was a good opportunity without going out of their way. So into one of the old alleys, with its queer, narrow perspective, they all went, talking of the old days when the closes were the fashionable habitations of the noblest families. In those days it was necessary for safety that people should dwell very *close* to each other; hence these narrow spaces between the rows of dwellings, so narrow that friends across the street took tea with each other, each sitting in his own front window.

Cousin Hugh told them of some of the incidents that made certain closes famous, and the girls readily pictured these miserable places as they were in the times when lords and ladies passed in and out of the quaint doorways. Now the poorest and most wretched are crowded into the rooms, and Fashion has moved her kingdom far outside these ancient narrow limits. Many of the closes and wynds have been obliterated in the march of improvement.

St. Giles's Church next claimed a visit, and the girls eagerly sought the tablet to the memory of plucky Jenny Geddes, who, though not a very saintly character, has proved quite a heroine, and is one of the best known personages associated with the church of St. Giles. The interior is very handsome, but very little of the ancient edifice exists in its original form.

Cousin Hugh suggested that, as they were not far from the Parliament House, it would be well to take a look at the fine hall, where they were likely to see some of the advocates walking about in their wigs and gowns.

"Americans always think them quite a novelty," said he, "and very likely your young ladies may be pleased to see them, Cousin Jeanie."

"Oh, by all means let us go and see them," urged Elizabeth. "Mamma said it was like a great masquerade, and she never forgot how it fascinated her."

From the Parliament House they made their way to beautiful Princes Street, where they lunched nearly opposite the Scott monument, and afterward paid a visit to the noble Gothic canopy under which is a colossal statue of Sir Walter and his much-loved "Camp."

The afternoon was devoted to seeing the various attractions of the Calton Hill.

"It is nice to get close to these monuments," remarked Leta, as they stood viewing the great unfinished national monument; "but I do think that 'distance lends enchantment to the view'; and, as Miss Gray said about the Castle, they are much more effective when we chance

to get a view of them from some other part of the city."

"But those fine stone columns are superb against the blue sky; don't you think so?" asked Clare.

"I think the finest thing up here is the splendid view. Let us go and sit on one of those benches and enjoy it," was Elizabeth's reply. All were glad to follow the suggestion of rest, and it was indeed a grand outlook that was spread before their admiring eyes. To the west and north, in the clear afternoon light, could be seen the waters of the Firth of Forth, the shores of Fife, and the summits of far-distant mountains. Cousin Hugh pointed out the much-talked-about Forth Bridge, of which they had seen photographs on every hand. He explained in his calm, serious way the remarkable engineering skill that had been brought to bear in its construction.

Some one suggested trying to see Holyrood before going back to the hotel, but Miss Gray vetoed any more exertion until after tea. Cousin Hugh had procured passes to take them to the Theatre Royal that evening, and they needed to rest in preparation. So they went down from the Calton Hill and wended their way to their pleasant rooms.

"We have seen a good many things to-day," said Mollie, as she sat after tea trying to collect her thoughts for the notebook. "But I suppose if we were to stay in Edinburgh a year we should find something new to see every day. What a lot we have to do in just one little week, girls! Do you realize it? And what a quantity of

photographs I shall have to get before I leave Edinburgh!"

They were delightful days that were spent by the girls in the noble metropolis. One very pleasant surprise came to them. Uncle Duncan had written to his attorney, who resided in Edinburgh, that his niece and her party were there. This gentleman's family were at the seashore, having taken a villa at North Berwick. As soon as they knew of Miss Gray's address, an invitation was sent, asking that all the party should come for at least a day at the seashore. Miss Gray knew just what a treat was probably in store for the lovers of Scott, but she did not enlighten them.

When it was announced at the dinner table that there was to be an afternoon drive to an old ruin several miles away, the girls, who loved a ruin as they loved all things with romance about them, were all expectation, but, strangely enough, made no inquiries as to its name. Everybody else seemed satisfied that it should be nameless, and it did not seem important that they should know. When they reached the little place called Canty Bay, all got out of the break and walked on toward the ruin. All at once some one mentioned the name of the old castle which they were about to see, and —

> "Sudden, close before them showed
> His towers Tantallon vast,
> Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
> And held impregnable in war."

The girls were wild with delight that they were now

in the very castle where the parting of Douglas and Marmion is represented to have taken place. They walked upon the ruined ramparts where poor Clara de Clare was wont to pace away the sorrowful hours, —

> "With book in hand and cross on breast
> And such a woful mien."

Their host and hostess were pleased at the evident enjoyment of their young guests. They expressed regret that the sea was too rough to admit of their going to the Bass Rock which loomed out of the water in gloomy vastness, just opposite Tantallon.

Very reluctantly the girls left the ruined stronghold of the Douglases, where their fresh imaginations readily conjured up all the characters that Scott has connected with it. In the grass of the courtyard they found a handful of bluebells, and, as they walked down the bit of road to Canty Bay, plucked many of the satiny scarlet poppies growing by the way.

Before tea the whole party walked to the beach not far from the pretty stone villa of their host, and saw the famous North Berwick Links, where a party were engaged in the game of golf. It had been a day filled with pleasant and new experiences.

Their last Edinburgh outing took Miss Gray's party to Melrose. In the same carriage were a typical American couple, seeing Europe for the first time in a thoroughly American way. They were a mother and son, the latter a recent graduate of a New England college, eager and modest in his desire to get the most good out

of his opportunity. A passing view of Borthwick Castle caused some queries as to its history, a guidebook was proffered by the young man, and in a few minutes conversation became general. Very few Americans had come in their way, and the girls had been rather anxious to meet some of their compatriots in order to compare notes.

Young Mr. Walton proved a desirable fellow-traveller, and his mother and Miss Gray found common ground for conversation. They all secured rooms at the old Abbey

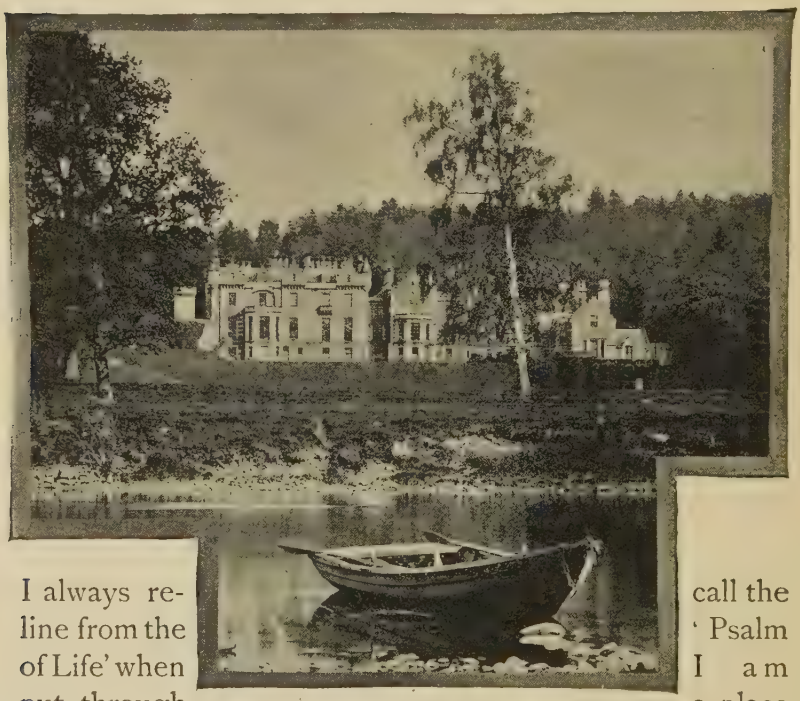
Hotel close to the ruined abbey so dear to Scott. At this neighboring inn he had many a social gathering with his literary friends. There are numerous relics of Sir Walter in the upper hall of the present hotel. Mollie and Leta were in ecstasies over their room, whose low, wide window looked out upon the abbey and the grave-

yard adjoining it. Mr. Walton had a copy of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," from which he read appropriate lines. His mother was rapturous at the realization of her dream of years. To see "fair Melrose" had been a desire from the time she had read the Lay in her seminary course. She was, moreover, what her son called, though with an indulgent smile, a "souvenir fiend." He assured the girls with assumed seriousness that he lived in hourly terror lest his mother should be taken into custody for indulging her pernicious desire for relics. Even as he spoke he flew to remonstrate with her as she was attempting to knock off a bit of the exquisite underlaid carving in the cloister. He seized both her hands, and she was obliged to desist; but a look in her blue eyes said, "I'll have it yet; see if I don't!"

To a true lover of Scott the *man* a visit to Abbotsford is tinged with sadness. Scott the antiquarian, the successful author, does not seem the same stricken spirit that haunts the rooms of the lovely palace into which he put so much of himself, his love and hope for posterity. It is now only a show place; strangers, with curious or careless gaze, follow the guide about, listen to his dry recital, buy a few photographs, and are gone.

"Ah me!" sighed Miss Gray, as they stood at a window looking out at the Tweed Scott loved so well; "I wish we might have a new society and call it *The Sympathetic Tourist Association.* I would devote the annual assessments to buying the privilege of seeing such places as Abbotsford as they ought to be seen. Every member

should bear a certificate of unimpeachable character, and be allowed to wander about the buildings and gardens at will. Then we could imbibe the spirit of the place.



I always re- call the line from the 'Psalm of Life' when I am put through a place I have longed to see by a feelingless guide, —

'Be not like dumb, driven cattle';

but one cannot help being both dumb and driven."

"Do you hear what is proposed, mother?" asked Mr. Walton, with a quizzical look. "You would never get

into any such society, I am afraid. They would not trust you alone in any of these places."

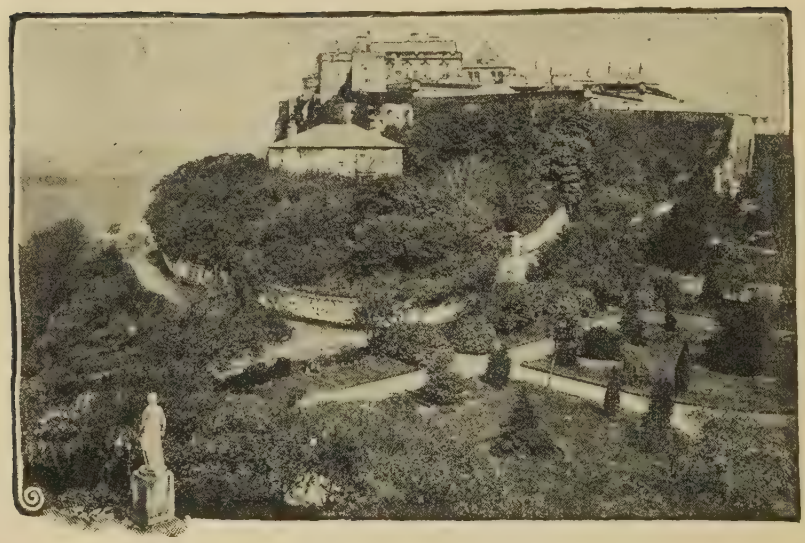
"Oh, I'd manage that," she replied, "and get my souvenirs too."

The next morning they drove to Dryburgh Abbey, with its ivy-grown arches and well-kept grounds. Here, as all the world knows, is the resting-place of Sir Walter Scott, a fitting locality in all respects, and not more sad to those who know his life than Abottsford.

. . . . . .

Perhaps sorrow should not be linked with Scott's memory. When we remember him as he was for many years, cheery and full of humor, a contributor to the happiness of so vast a number of readers, an honest man who kept his word at the price of life itself, his seems a successful life, — a life to be glad for and to imitate.

CHAPTER XXVII.



THE TROSSACHS — AND FAREWELL!

On their way to the Trossachs, the Gray party, who now felt that they were "homeward bound," staid a few hours at Stirling. The castle, Wallace monument, and the field of Bannockburn, all received hasty but appreciative visits, and then the tourists sped on their way to Callander, where they were to take the coach for the Trossachs Hotel.

As they drove over Callander Bridge, their driver, who spoke the broadest kind of Scotch, directed the attention of his passengers to Ben Ledi. He even quoted copiously from "The Lady of the Lake" though had it not been for Leta's copy, bought on her last shopping excursion in Edinburgh, the girls would have found his lines unintelligible. They had but an indistinct view of Ben Ledi, for the mists were gathering thick about the summit, and by the time they reached Duncraggan the rain was falling steadily. It was rather a dreary beginning for their long-anticipated Trossachs tour, although they were not so unfortunate as many travellers, who can give but one day to the trip.

The handsome Trossachs Hotel, with its spirelike towers, looked very inviting as the coach rolled up before the entrance. Upon the steps, and looking expectantly among the umbrella-shadowed figures in the coach, stood Mr. Brewster and — Leta's father and her brother Jack. Jack was waving his hat excitedly and shouting, "Hullo, Lete! How's this for a surprise party? You didn't expect to see me, did you?"

It was indeed a surprise to them all. Mr. Barrows was somewhat tired with close application to business, and his physician and Mr. Brewster had persuaded him that a sea voyage would make him feel like himself again.

Mollie and Elizabeth shared the delight of their friends, and the waiters at *table d'hôte* declared they had never served a happier set of people than the young American ladies and their indulgent papas.

The evening was spent in the pretty reading-room, where a bright fire made up for the gloomy weather without. Home letters were written, probably the last before the writers themselves should set out for home. Plans were discussed, and some of the notes were read for the benefit of the gentlemen and Jack, who criticised with the delightful freedom accorded to his years. Then Mr. Brewster announced the piece of news to which he had referred in his letter to Clare. He had come on business for the firm of which he was a member, and had decided just before leaving Boston that it would be best for him to remain in the British Isles for some three months. The point still to be decided was whether Clare should remain with him or return with Miss Gray. Clare looked so well that her father concluded the climate must have agreed with her, and it was evident that he desired very much to keep her with him. To Clare the thought of going home and not finding her father there was a little dreary, so it was easy to guess what the decision would be. Miss Gray's party would have Mr. Barrows and Jack in place of Clare, and Jack seemed of the opinion that his father and he would compensate for any loss.

The next morning was not so bright as the girls desired, but the rain had ceased and the mists seemed to be in a fair way to —

> "fold their tents like the Arabs
> And as silently steal away."

Clare was very anxious to "take a picture" with her

father's camera; so as soon as it was light enough she and her father, accompanied by energetic Jack, set out to find a "point of view." There were so many it was

difficult to decide on one, and by the time they went in to breakfast she had "taken" a half-dozen or more.

The afternoon was bright with sunshine.

"Just the time to go to Ellen's Isle," said Leta, "and see Loch Katrine —

'gleaming in the setting sun,'

as Fitz-James saw it."

The girls wanted to walk to the lake, but the two gentlemen objected, and so a carriage was soon at the door.

"You will get tired enough," said Mr. Barrows, "if you do any rough climbing on the shores of the lake. Save your strength at the start, and you will be glad of it later."

The camera, a lunch basket, and several rugs were packed under the seats of the carriage. Elizabeth carried a small notebook, but she said it was no use now to take her sketchbook — the "Hawkeye" did the work so much better, and more quickly. She received many compliments, however, for her industry and skill as the gentlemen looked over her collection. Jack expressed approval of the sketches containing people and animals. He was much pleased with the one taken in the days that seemed so long ago to the girls, — that representing Bran and his master on the deck of the little steamer. Mollie told him of Bran's escapade, and Master Jack was highly entertained.

"I should like to see that big dog and those boys that have the birds' eggs, that you were telling me about last evening. Where is it they live? Do you suppose father would take me there?"

Mollie explained that the boys lived rather too far away, but that very probably he would see Bran and Mr. Muir at Glasgow.

On their way to the lake the girls saw many attractive bits of woodland scenery, which they determined to explore during their stay in the vicinity.

"I am so glad we haven't to hurry away from Ellen Douglas's lovely home, but can see this region pretty

thoroughly," said Clare, as they stood on the rustic pier, waiting for their boats to be made ready.

"I can hardly wait to get to the island. Are you as anxious to find the place where the bower used to be as I am, I wonder?" asked Leta; "and do you suppose we shall be able to see the place where Fitz-James stood when he first saw Ellen?"

"One place ought to be as good as another for that," said Mr. Barrows, with a desire to tease. "He really didn't see her anywhere, did he?"

"Now, papa, you must not say anything to dispel the illusion of this perfectly beautiful place. I am just as sure of Ellen Douglas as I am of — Martha Washington — so there! Girls, don't you listen to any of papa's insinuations; he's only trying to tease us."

"Leta is very fond of Scott, and likes to fancy all his characters are real persons," said Miss Gray; "but she also discriminates between fact and fiction when necessary."

"All right, daughter. I am glad to see you enjoy your school work so much. Suppose you read us a description of the island, as we are getting close to it," said Mr. Barrows, handing Leta her little copy of the "Lady," which he took from his pocket.

Leta found the place and read: —

> "'The stranger viewed the shore around;
> 'Twas all so close with copse-wood bound,
> Nor track nor pathway might declare
> That human foot frequented there,

Until the mountain maiden showed
A clambering, unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen,
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground;
Here for retreat in dangerous hour
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.'"

A happy hour was spent in exploring the island and identifying various spots mentioned in the poem. Several views were taken, and each of the girls posed in a picturesque background as "A Modern Ellen Douglas." Then to Leta's extreme satisfaction they rowed to the Silver Strand and secured some of the pebbles to carry home. The sunset was a fine one. Its golden light rested upon the crests of the—

"Mountains that like giants stand
To sentinel enchanted land."

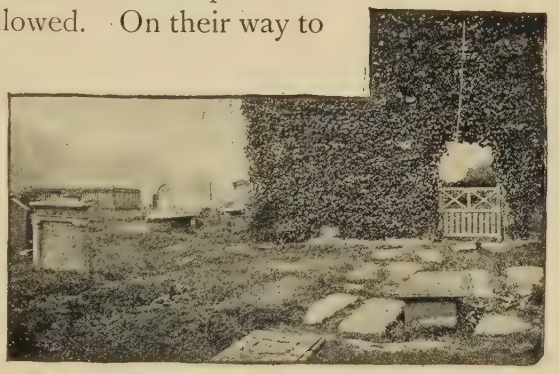
The shadows grew longer and deeper upon the placid water, and in the mellow light of evening they pulled toward the landing-pier.

Each day of the sojourn at the Trossachs was replete with enjoyment. Jack found his greatest satisfaction in the trip to Balquhidder, where the grave of Rob Roy is pointed out. He listened with awed delight to the stories that the natives love to relate concerning this great Highland chief.

"I wish he was alive now and I could see him this minute; I'd be glad, I tell you," said Master Jack, as they

stood looking at the stone that is said to mark the resting-place of the hero. "All the great folks seem to be dead round here," he continued with an air of disapproval.

"You forget 'present company,' Jack," reminded Mollie, and Jack looked rather surprised at the laugh which followed. On their way to Glasgow from the Trossachs the travellers went by steamer across Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond. They stopped over for a day at Tarbet Hotel to enjoy the better the fine scenery of Loch Lomond, "the Queen of Scottish Lakes." As their train rolled into Glasgow that city had for the girls a quite familiar look.



"It seems a long time since we were here, doesn't it?" asked Elizabeth.

"Yes, indeed," was Mollie's ready reply. "Why, it seems to me as if I used to live here when I was a child. I suppose it is because I have become so much wiser than I was the first time I was in Glasgow. Girls, don't you feel older and wiser since we came to Europe?"

"I feel that there is more for me to learn after I go

home — more than I shall be able to learn in a long, long time," said Leta seriously, as she recalled the long list of "things to look up" which each girl had kept. "I suppose I shall not find much time for extras, though: it will be all I can do to settle down to my regular work in college."

"I expect to live it all over again with mamma," said Mollie. "She will want to hear so much more about it than my letters have told her."

All the party but Miss Gray went to a hotel in Glasgow; she had promised if possible to stay a little while with Mrs. Wales, as it might be long before they met gaain. Mr. Barrows was quite eager to see the home of Robert Burns, who was a favorite of his; so he took Leta and Mollie with him on this little trip, accompanied, of course, by Master Jack.

Jack's account of the midnight ride of Tam O'Shanter, gathered in part from their driver at Ayr and filled out from his own conclusions, was of the most thrilling interest. He had besought his father to stay at Alloway Kirk till midnight in order that he might see the witches

who pursued Tam and his gray mare Maggie. Mollie brought some of the ivy leaves that are found in the kirkyard for Clare, and Leta had two of the pretty copies of Burns's poems which are sold at the cottage, for Clare and Elizabeth.

. . . . . .

The last night of their stay in Glasgow had come. On the morrow the party would embark for America, — all save Mr. Brewster and Clare, for it had been decided that Clare should remain abroad with her father. He had found, meanwhile, that business interests would detain him for some time in the vicinity of Glasgow. Clare would have the companionship of Mrs. Wales at such times as her father was engaged in business, so she hoped not to miss the girls.

"We shall talk about you every day, and wonder what you are doing, and what kind of weather you are having on the ocean. I have a bundle of steamer letters, enough to last you ten days. Don't let me forget to give them to you when we get back to the hotel," said Clare, as they were all chatting in Mrs. Wales's bright dining-room, where they had been taking tea on their last evening.

"That will be fun, won't it? And you know we got a whole lot of letters at the steamer office this morning. We are not going to open a single one till we are at sea. You can imagine us reading them on deck. I hope we can have a 'cosey corner' going home; but we shall miss

some of our old callers, I suppose," said Leta. "We shall have papa and Jack, though."

Miss Gray was indulging in a smile at the thought of a surprise that awaited them in regard to certain of their fellow-passengers. She had received several letters in the past few days, of which the girls knew nothing as yet.

"Miss Gray has a secret; I know she has," said Mollie; "and her secrets are generally nice ones. So be prepared, girls; I believe something is going to happen soon."

Sure enough, Mrs. Wales's pretty, white-capped maid was just showing in callers, who proved to be what Mollie would call "a very nice surprise." It was Gordon and Meena Muir, with their sister, who resided in Glasgow,—Mrs. Leslie. Mrs. Wales had risen to receive them, and led the way to the drawing-room, where a merry conversation was soon carried on. News from the North was in demand, and the Muirs brought many messages from friends, and not a few parcels from "Birkie House." Aunt Jessie had sent a box of beautiful late-summer flowers from her carefully tended garden. She had put in some fragrant rosebuds, which she wished the girls to wear, and think of her.

Gordon handed Clare a small box, and watched her as she opened it. The contents had reference to an incident in those summer days so recently past, yet so thoroughly interwoven with all their days to come. The box contained several sprigs of white heather. On one

of their expeditions Clare had expressed a wish for some, and Gordon had announced his determination to find it for her. He told her some of the beliefs held concerning the white heather, and he added certain views of his own. And half in jest a compact was made, and Clare promised to accept and wear the heather whenever Gordon should bring or send it to her. She had forgotten the incident, but as she took the shimmering white flowers out of their wrappings it all came back, — the heather hill, on whose side they stood; the mist wreathing the summit, to which they were about to climb; and far off to the east the sea, dancing in the sunlight. They had left the others at some distance below, and she and Gordon were alone in this quiet upper world — alone with the exception of Bran, who watched the seagulls in their silvery flight above the blue water. They were a congenial trio, and their friendship might have dated back for years rather than weeks. Bran's allegiance to Clare was often remarked by the rest; he obeyed her as readily as he did his master.

As she held the heather sprigs in her hand and lost herself in thought, Mr. Brewster came in, accompanied by Jack and his father. Clare introduced Gordon to her father, who said: —

"I think I have heard of you, Mr. Muir. I am glad to meet you; but where is our friend Bran, of whose accomplishments I have heard so much? I trust I shall be able to make his acquaintance."

"Oh, yes; Bran has come with me from the North,

but I left him in his kennel this evening. He is tired from his journey, and will feel better for a night's rest. To-morrow he shall pay his respects to you and all his friends."

Clare stood with her arm through her father's as he and Gordon chatted pleasantly on various topics. The white heather was fastened in her dress; that much of their compact was sealed. They were to be friends always now, to keep one another in mind, to hope all good fortune for each other; and the heather was a kind of pledge between them. It was something like this that Gordon had implied on the day they stood upon the hillside; and Clare, under the spell of the silent beauty around them, had absently assented. But now the white token from the northern hills seemed to have brought into her heart all joy, and a realization of new meaning in Gordon's words brought the color to her cheeks and brightness to her eyes.

Miss Gray, from her seat on the sofa, where she was talking with Mrs. Leslie, watched the group, and saw that Gordon and Mr. Brewster were getting on famously together. She sought the faces of her four girls as they talked in different parts of the room. They all looked happy, and to the eyes of the teacher, who knew them so well, very lovable, and deserving of the brightest of futures. And, should their lives be mingled shadow with sunshine, she knew there was strength of character to bear it bravely.

A question from Mrs. Leslie startled Miss Gray from

her reflections, and poor, weary Jack, who had curled himself up in an easy-chair, wakened from a nap and called attention to the lateness of the hour.

"You girls ought to get through talking some time to-night, if you expect to get started for America to-morrow. I am going to the hotel to go to bed. Come on, papa; come, Mollie. Leta can stay all night if she wants to. Good night, Mr. Wales. Good night, Mrs. Wales. Excuse my being so sleepy," and Master Jack, seizing his papa's hand, strove to take his departure.

At the railway station next day, as they were about taking the train for Greenock, where the steamer awaited her passengers, they met Dr. and Mrs. Houston and Rosalie. This was one of Miss Gray's "nice surprises." The other was to come when they stopped at Moville. All their Glasgow friends accompanied them to Greenock. Clare and her father, with Bran and Gordon Muir, went with them on the tender, staying as long as they possibly could. It was very hard to say the final good-by, but the ominous whistle had to be obeyed, although it was several hours before the steamer left her moorings.

After dinner, which was served late, all Miss Gray's party went up to their old place on the upper deck and watched the lights of Greenock twinkling in the misty darkness. Mr. Barrows went with them, but Jack was fast asleep in his berth.

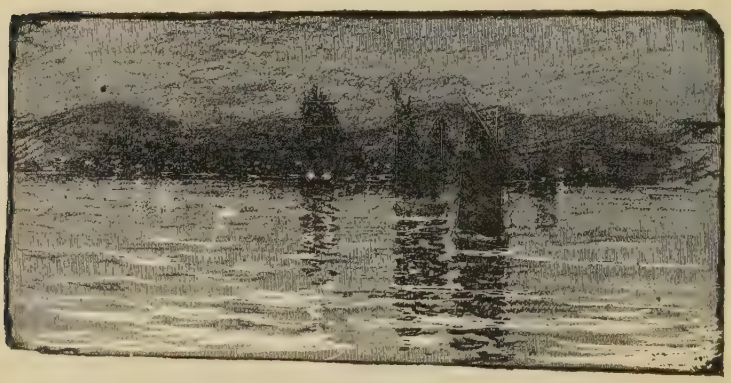
"And so we are starting for home," said Mollie, "and the dear Old World will soon be only a memory. Oh!

I do hope we can all come back some day. How cold it is up here, though!"

Nobody staid long on deck, and indeed the lighted saloons were almost empty. There were no festivities on this first night, and everybody fell asleep with little ceremony.

Mollie's last remark, made in a sleepy tone, was:—

"Who do you suppose will be our Moville surprise?"



BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE LITTLE COLONEL BOOKS
(Trade Mark)

By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON

Each 1 vol., large 12mo, cloth decorative, per vol $1.50

The Little Colonel Stories.
(Trade Mark)
Illustrated.

Being three "Little Colonel" stories in the Cosy Corner Series, "The Little Colonel," "Two Little Knights of Kentucky," and "The Giant Scissors," put into a single volume.

The Little Colonel's House Party.
(Trade Mark)
Illustrated by Louis Meynell.

The Little Colonel's Holidays.
(Trade Mark)
Illustrated by L. J. Bridgman.

The Little Colonel's Hero.
(Trade Mark)
Illustrated by E. B. Barry.

The Little Colonel at Boarding School.
(Trade Mark)
Illustrated by E. B. Barry.

The Little Colonel in Arizona.
(Trade Mark)
Illustrated by E. B. Barry.

The Little Colonel's Christmas Vacation.
(Trade Mark)
Illustrated by E. B. Barry.

The Little Colonel, Maid of Honour.
(Trade Mark)
Illustrated by E. B. Barry.

The Little Colonel.
(Trade Mark)
Two Little Knights of Kentucky.
The Giant Scissors.
Big Brother.

Special Holiday Editions

Each one volume, cloth decorative, small quarto, $1.25.

New plates, handsomely illustrated, with eight full-page drawings in color.

"The books are as satisfactory to the small girls, who find them adorable, as for the mothers and librarians, who delight in their influence." — *Christian Register.*

These four volumes, boxed as a four-volume set . $5.00

In the Desert of Waiting: THE LEGEND OF CAMELBACK MOUNTAIN.

The Three Weavers: A FAIRY TALE FOR FATHERS AND MOTHERS AS WELL AS FOR THEIR DAUGHTERS.

Keeping Tryst.
The Legend of the Bleeding Heart.

Each one volume, tall 16mo, cloth decorative . $0.50
Paper boards 35

There has been a constant demand for publication in separate form of these four stories, which were originally included in four of the "Little Colonel" books.

Joel: A Boy of Galilee. By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON. Illustrated by L. J. Bridgman.

New illustrated edition, uniform with the Little Colonel Books, 1 vol., large 12mo, cloth decorative . $1.50

A story of the time of Christ, which is one of the author's best-known books.

Asa Holmes; OR, AT THE CROSS-ROADS. A sketch of Country Life and Country Humor. By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON. With a frontispiece by Ernest Fosbery.
Large 16mo, cloth, gilt top . . . $1.00

"'Asa Holmes; or, At the Cross-Roads' is the most delightful, most sympathetic and wholesome book that has been published in a long while." — *Boston Times.*

The Rival Campers; OR, THE ADVENTURES OF HENRY BURNS. By RUEL PERLEY SMITH.
Square 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . $1.50

Here is a book which will grip and enthuse every boy reader. It is the story of a party of typical American lads, courageous, alert, and athletic, who spend a summer camping on an island off the Maine coast.

"The best boys' book since 'Tom Sawyer.'" — *San Francisco Examiner.*

The Rival Campers Afloat; OR, THE PRIZE YACHT VIKING. By RUEL PERLEY SMITH.
Square 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . $1.50

This book is a continuation of the adventures of "The Rival Campers" on their prize yacht *Viking*. An accidental collision results in a series of exciting adventures, culminating in a mysterious chase, the loss of their prize yacht, and its recapture by means of their old yacht, *Surprise*.

The Rival Campers Ashore. By RUEL PERLEY SMITH, author of "The Rival Campers," "The Rival Campers Afloat," etc.
Square 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . $1.50

"The Rival Campers Ashore" deals with the adventures of the campers and their friends in and around the town of Benton. Mr. Smith introduces a new character, — a girl, — who shows them the way to an old mill, around which the mystery of the story revolves. The girl is an admirable acquisition, proving as daring and resourceful as the campers themselves.

The Young Section-Hand; OR, THE ADVENTURES OF ALLAN WEST. By BURTON E. STEVENSON, author of "The Marathon Mystery," etc.
Square 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated by L. J. Bridgman $1.50

Mr. Stevenson's hero is a manly lad of sixteen, who is given a chance as a section-hand on a big Western railroad, and whose experiences are as real as they are thrilling.

The Young Train Dispatcher. By BURTON E. STEVENSON, author of "The Young Section-hand," etc.
Square 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . $1.50

The young hero has many chances to prove his manliness and courage in the exciting adventures which befall him in the discharge of his duty.

Captain Jack Lorimer. By WINN STANDISH.
Square 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated by A. B. Shute $1.50

Jack is a fine example of the all-around American high-school boy. He has the sturdy qualities boys admire, and his fondness for clean, honest sport of all kinds will strike a chord of sympathy among athletic youths.

Jack Lorimer's Champions; or, Sports on Land and Lake. By WINN STANDISH, author of "Captain Jack Lorimer," etc.
Square 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated $1.50

All boys and girls who take an interest in school athletics will wish to read of the exploits of the Millvale High School students, under the leadership of Captain Jack Lorimer.

Captain Jack's Champions play quite as good ball as do some of the teams on the large leagues, and they put all opponents to good hard work in other summer sports.

Jack Lorimer and his friends stand out as the finest examples of all-round American high school boys and girls.

Beautiful Joe's Paradise; OR, THE ISLAND OF BROTHERLY LOVE. A sequel to "Beautiful Joe." By MARSHALL SAUNDERS, author of "Beautiful Joe."

One vol., library 12mo, cloth, illustrated . $1.50

"This book revives the spirit of 'Beautiful Joe' capitally. It is fairly riotous with fun, and as a whole is about as unusual as anything in the animal book line that has seen the light. It is a book for juveniles — old and young."— *Philadelphia Item.*

'Tilda Jane. By MARSHALL SAUNDERS.

One vol., 12mo, fully illustrated, cloth decorative, $1.50

"It is one of those exquisitely simple and truthful books that win and charm the reader, and I did not put it down until I had finished it — honest! And I am sure that every one, young or old, who reads will be proud and happy to make the acquaintance of the delicious waif.

"I cannot think of any better book for children than this. I commend it unreservedly." — *Cyrus Townsend Brady.*

The Story of the Graveleys. By MARSHALL SAUNDERS, author of "Beautiful Joe's Paradise," "'Tilda Jane," etc.

Library 12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated by E. B. Barry $1.50

Here we have the haps and mishaps, the trials and triumphs, of a delightful New England family, of whose devotion and sturdiness it will do the reader good to hear.

Born to the Blue. By FLORENCE KIMBALL RUSSEL.

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . . $1.25

The atmosphere of army life on the plains breathes on every page of this delightful tale. The boy is the son of a captain of U. S. cavalry stationed at a frontier post in the days when our regulars earned the gratitude of a nation.

In West Point Gray.

By FLORENCE KIMBALL RUSSEL.

12mo, cloth decorative, illustrated . . $1.25

West Point forms the background for the second volume in this series, and gives us the adventures of Jack as a cadet. Here the training of his childhood days in the frontier army post stands him in good stead; and he quickly becomes the central figure of the West Point life.

The Sandman; His Farm Stories.

By WILLIAM J. HOPKINS. With fifty illustrations by Ada Clendenin Williamson.

Large 12mo, decorative cover . . . $1.50

"An amusing, original book, written for the benefit of very small children. It should be one of the most popular of the year's books for reading to small children."—*Buffalo Express.*

The Sandman: More Farm Stories.

By WILLIAM J. HOPKINS.

Large 12mo, decorative cover, fully illustrated $1.50

Mr. Hopkins's first essay at bedtime stories met with such approval that this second book of "Sandman" tales was issued for scores of eager children. Life on the farm, and out-of-doors, is portrayed in his inimitable manner.

The Sandman: His Ship Stories.

By WILLIAM J. HOPKINS, author of "The Sandman: His Farm Stories," etc.

Large 12mo, decorative cover, fully illustrated $1.50

"Mothers and fathers and kind elder sisters who put the little ones to bed, and rack their brains for stories, will find this book a treasure." — *Cleveland Leader.*

"Children call for these stories over and over again."—*Chicago Evening Post.*

COSY CORNER SERIES

It is the intention of the publishers that this series shall contain only the very highest and purest literature, — stories that shall not only appeal to the children themselves, but be appreciated by all those who feel with them in their joys and sorrows.

The numerous illustrations in each book are by well-known artists, and each volume has a separate attractive cover design.

Each 1 vol., 16mo, cloth $0.50

By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON

The Little Colonel. (Trade Mark.)

The scene of this story is laid in Kentucky. Its heroine is a small girl, who is known as the Little Colonel, on account of her fancied resemblance to an old-school Southern gentleman, whose fine estate and old family are famous in the region.

The Giant Scissors.

This is the story of Joyce and of her adventures in France. Joyce is a great friend of the Little Colonel, and in later volumes shares with her the delightful experiences of the "House Party" and the "Holidays."

Two Little Knights of Kentucky.

WHO WERE THE LITTLE COLONEL'S NEIGHBORS.

In this volume the Little Colonel returns to us like an old friend, but with added grace and charm. She is not, however, the central figure of the story, that place being taken by the "two little knights."

Mildred's Inheritance.

A delightful little story of a lonely English girl who comes to America and is befriended by a sympathetic American family who are attracted by her beautiful speaking voice. By means of this one gift she is enabled to help a school-girl who has temporarily lost the use of her eyes, and thus finally her life becomes a busy, happy one.

By ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON (Continued)

Cicely and Other Stories for Girls.

The readers of Mrs. Johnston's charming juveniles will be glad to learn of the issue of this volume for young people.

Aunt 'Liza's Hero and Other Stories.

A collection of six bright little stories, which will appeal to all boys and most girls.

Big Brother.

A story of two boys. The devotion and care of Steven, himself a small boy, for his baby brother, is the theme of the simple tale.

Ole Mammy's Torment.

"Ole Mammy's Torment" has been fitly called "a classic of Southern life." It relates the haps and mishaps of a small negro lad, and tells how he was led by love and kindness to a knowledge of the right.

The Story of Dago.

In this story Mrs. Johnston relates the story of Dago, a pet monkey, owned jointly by two brothers. Dago tells his own story, and the account of his haps and mishaps is both interesting and amusing.

The Quilt That Jack Built.

A pleasant little story of a boy's labor of love, and how it changed the course of his life many years after it was accomplished.

Flip's Islands of Providence.

A story of a boy's life battle, his early defeat, and his final triumph, well worth the reading.

By EDITH ROBINSON

A Little Puritan's First Christmas.

A Story of Colonial times in Boston, telling how Christmas was invented by Betty Sewall, a typical child of the Puritans, aided by her brother Sam.

A Little Daughter of Liberty.

The author introduces this story as follows:

"One ride is memorable in the early history of the American Revolution, the well-known ride of Paul Revere. Equally deserving of commendation is another ride, — the ride of Anthony Severn, — which was no less historic in its action or memorable in its consequences."

A Loyal Little Maid.

A delightful and interesting story of Revolutionary days, in which the child heroine, Betsey Schuyler, renders important services to George Washington.

A Little Puritan Rebel.

This is an historical tale of a real girl, during the time when the gallant Sir Harry Vane was governor of Massachusetts.

A Little Puritan Pioneer.

The scene of this story is laid in the Puritan settlement at Charlestown.

A Little Puritan Bound Girl.

A story of Boston in Puritan days, which is of great interest to youthful readers.

A Little Puritan Cavalier.

The story of a "Little Puritan Cavalier" who tried with all his boyish enthusiasm to emulate the spirit and ideals of the dead Crusaders.

A Puritan Knight Errant.

The story tells of a young lad in Colonial times who endeavored to carry out the high ideals of the knights of olden days.

By OUIDA (Louise de la Ramée)

A Dog of Flanders: A Christmas Story.

Too well and favorably known to require description.

The Nurnberg Stove.

This beautiful story has never before been published at a popular price.

By FRANCES MARGARET FOX

The Little Giant's Neighbours.

A charming nature story of a "little giant" whose neighbours were the creatures of the field and garden.

Farmer Brown and the Birds.

A little story which teaches children that the birds are man's best friends.

Betty of Old Mackinaw.

A charming story of child-life, appealing especially to the little readers who like stories of "real people."

Brother Billy.

The story of Betty's brother, and some further adventures of Betty herself.

Mother Nature's Little Ones.

Curious little sketches describing the early lifetime, or "childhood," of the little creatures out-of-doors.

How Christmas Came to the Mulvaneys.

A bright, lifelike little story of a family of poor children, with an unlimited capacity for fun and mischief. The wonderful never-to-be forgotten Christmas that came to them is the climax of a series of exciting incidents.

By MISS MULOCK

The Little Lame Prince.

A delightful story of a little boy who has many adventures by means of the magic gifts of his fairy godmother.

Adventures of a Brownie.

The story of a household elf who torments the cook and gardener, but is a constant joy and delight to the children who love and trust him.

His Little Mother.

Miss Mulock's short stories for children are a constant source of delight to them, and "His Little Mother," in this new and attractive dress, will be welcomed by hosts of youthful readers.

Little Sunshine's Holiday.

An attractive story of a summer outing. "Little Sunshine" is another of those beautiful child-characters for which Miss Mulock is so justly famous.

By MARSHALL SAUNDERS

For His Country.

A sweet and graceful story of a little boy who loved his country; written with that charm which has endeared Miss Saunders to hosts of readers.

Nita, the Story of an Irish Setter.

In this touching little book, Miss Saunders shows how dear to her heart are all of God's dumb creatures.

Alpatok, the Story of an Eskimo Dog.

Alpatok, an Eskimo dog from the far north, was stolen from his master and left to starve in a strange city, but was befriended and cared for, until he was able to return to his owner.

By WILL ALLEN DROMGOOLE

The Farrier's Dog and His Fellow.

This story, written by the gifted young Southern woman, will appeal to all that is best in the natures of the many admirers of her graceful and piquant style.

The Fortunes of the Fellow.

Those who read and enjoyed the pathos and charm of "The Farrier's Dog and His Fellow" will welcome the further account of the adventures of Baydaw and the Fellow at the home of the kindly smith.

The Best of Friends.

This continues the experiences of the Farrier's dog and his Fellow, written in Miss Dromgoole's well-known charming style.

Down in Dixie.

A fascinating story for boys and girls, of a family of Alabama children who move to Florida and grow up in the South.

By MARIAN W. WILDMAN

Loyalty Island.

An account of the adventures of four children and their pet dog on an island, and how they cleared their brother from the suspicion of dishonesty.

Theodore and Theodora.

This is a story of the exploits and mishaps of two mischievous twins, and continues the adventures of the interesting group of children in "Loyalty Island."